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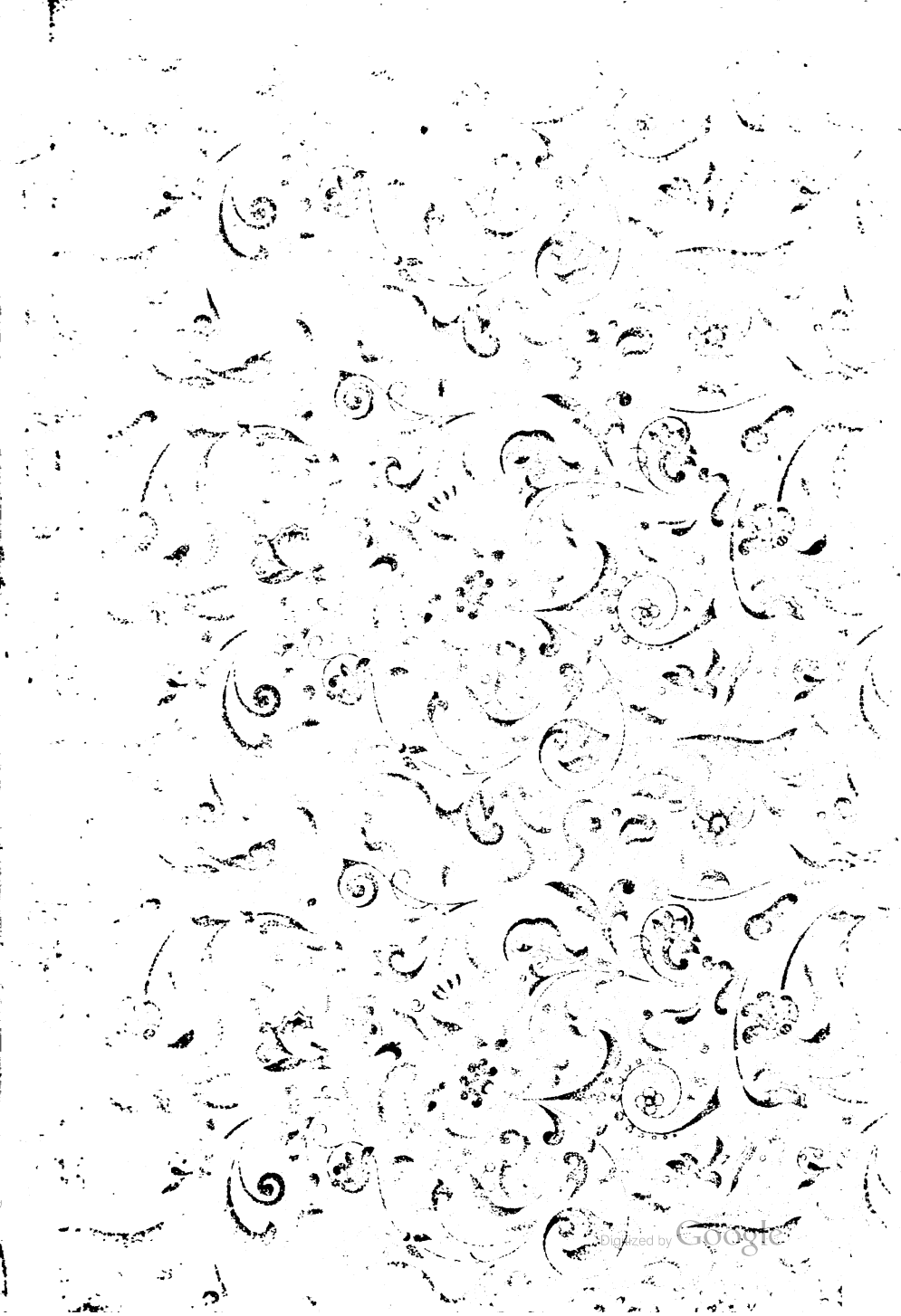
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ELISE:

A STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR.

BY S. M. M. X.



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TO

M. B. M.

WITH A GRATEFUL HEART.

"Her children shall rise up and call her
blessed."

PREFACE.

A WAVE of misguided faith seems sweeping the world in these latter days, at a time when all faith in the supernatural is apparently dying out.

A half truth is always more dangerous than a whole lie. There is generally a grain of truth to be found in all heresies, which only makes them the more dreadful. Spiritualism, with its vulgar seances, table tipping and silly, empty messages from the unseen world, is not so dangerous a form of heresy as that which now holds the minds of many under the names of Psychology, Mind-reading, Soul-building, etc., etc.

It is with this thought that we have tried to show by means of a simple child's story that our Holy Mother the Church can satisfy our needs and longings for communion with the unseen world around us, far better than any method of man's invention.

That our Lord so bent Himself to the weakness of our human nature, as to do most of His teaching through stories; and that there is a need of Catholic books for children, is one excuse for writing one.

MT. ST. MARY'S,
MONTH OF THE SACRED HEART, 1894.



CHAPTER I.

REGALIA.

THE Civil War had actually begun. The entire country, from north to south, was in a ferment of excitement. Sumter had been fired upon. Four of the states had actually joined the Confederacy. President Lincoln had issued a proclamation, calling for troops. There would be no longer any wavering; all were called upon to make their choice between Union or Secession.

Regalia was a large plantation, situated on the Mississippi River, about thirty miles north of New Orleans. It had been the property of the La Borde family for many generations.

The last descendant of the family, however, was a daughter, Elise La Borde, and she had married M. Henri de la Roche, who was the present master of the property, thus the name of La Borde became extinct. It was a grand old place, and most beautiful it looked on this lovely evening in June, when our story commences. The family mansion stood at the

top of a long green lawn which sloped down in terraces to the river. The house was of grey stone, with large square front, and wings on either side. It had a broad veranda running all around it which was used as a parlor whenever the weather permitted. At the front, facing the river, was a large circular driveway connected with the high road by an avenue shaded with large orange trees having overhanging branches fragrant with both flowers and fruit. The entire plantation was protected from the high road by a hedge of the Asage orange, which formed a thick impenetrable screen at least eight feet high. From the driveway in the front were stone steps leading down the terraces to the boat landing on the river. On the terraces were arranged groups of ornamental trees and shrubbery in such a manner as not to hide the view of the broad Mississippi from the veranda. On both sides of the house, and up to the high road behind the mansion, was the garden. Ah! how can one find words to describe the beauty of a tropical garden. Its very fragrance made the veranda a place of too much luxury. Imagine an arbor completely covered with stephanotis, with its great waxen clusters of flowers, clumps of bouvardias some twenty feet or more in height, rose trees laden down with clusters of buds and blossoms. In the centre of the garden was a large fountain which consisted of a group of bronze figures on a round base which rested on four large basins, one within the other, into

which the water was continually falling with a musical sound. The groups of shrubbery were so arranged that one constantly came suddenly upon surprises. Here a shrine to Our Blessed Lady, there one to St. Joseph—for the family were staunch Catholics from the beginning—beautiful masses of bloom completely hidden, until you came upon them unawares. Sufficient wildness was permitted to give a certain charm to the place, especially noticeable this year; as, owing to the uncertainty of the times, it had been somewhat neglected.

This entire property extended for about three miles along the river. The master, like his wife, was a descendant of one of the old French families of Louisiana. He was in great trouble and distress now, as he stood there on the veranda looking sadly at his young wife. She was kissing “Good Night” to her youngest boys, twins of only two years of age. The negroes had all left them, and the plantation lay idle.

M. de la Roche was known as a firm Unionist, and strong anti-slavery man; although by force of circumstances he was obliged to own slaves. He now knew, too well, that the South would be no longer a safe home for his family, and that it would be necessary to move North. The only persons who had not deserted them in the present trouble, were the French governess, the old nurse, Marie, and a simple-hearted negro lad by the name of Jacques.

These had clung faithfully to the family through all their troubles, but now even they must go. The master told them that deeply as he regretted it, he could not afford to take them North with him. He could only raise enough from the estate to carry his family, and when North, he must find work to support them, as he could no longer look for an income from his Southern property. This decision cost many tears on both sides. Marie scouted the idea of leaving her mistress, and refused to listen to any arguments.

"Miss Elise git along widout me? Git along!" and she turned her broad shoulders shaking with laughter at the bare idea. Just now she carried off the babies for the night, and Madame turned to her husband.

She was a tiny little woman, with a round, child-like form, and light brown wavy hair, done up in a simple knot at the back of her neck, while it escaped in short curls round her head. Her dress of light sea green organdie muslin, with white crêpe illusion ruches at the neck and wrist, made one think, instinctively of the ocean, and fresh salt breezes. She was still a perfect child and under the dominion of and cared for by old Marie as much as any of her children, spoiled, petted, and selfish, as all spoiled children are, and wholly unfit for the cares of wife and motherhood. The plantation was hers, as she, being an only child, succeeded to the family estate.

At the time of their marriage M. de la Roche had listened to the prayers of her old parents and had given up his own cherished plans to manage the estate, rather than separate them from their daughter. After her mother's death the entire care of the children fell upon Marie. As has before been said, Madame was among them a child herself. Now, when her husband tried to make her comprehend their present condition, he was only met with sobs and tears, and he could only console her like the children, by changing the subject. She had firm faith in his abilities, and a reliance that he would bring them through the storm, as he always had done heretofore.

M. de la Roche had been educated North, at a Jesuit college, in New York. There he had learned to detest slavery, and when circumstances had, as it were, forced him into the position of a slave owner, he accepted it with the intention of striving with all his might to remedy the evil. He had watched the coming struggle with intense interest, and in spite of the reproaches of his own brothers and the entreaties of his wife, he had openly showed his colors as a staunch Unionist from the first. For this reason he was hated by his neighbors and now that war had been proclaimed, he well knew that it would be necessary to fly to the North for protection. He was a tall, dark, military looking man, straight back, and head well poised on his shoulders, dark hair, and

eyes with a sad, wistful expression. It deepened now, while he looked fondly on his wife, as she turned to him and spoke :

"What is it, Henri, now? You look so sad ; it seems to me you always look sad now-a-days. I'm sure I need cheering a little in all our troubles."

"Yes, Elise, things are becoming worse hourly, the sooner we leave the better. Are you nearly ready?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Madame fretfully. "You know I leave all those things to Marie, and now she has to do all the work of the house. Mademoiselle has been packing and they leave me all the care of the children. I never saw such naughty, troublesome children before in my life. I told them I should tell you of them. This morning I brought them out here. I told Henri and Elise they must study their lessons while I amused the twins; they began so well, that I got entirely absorbed in my book and forgot all about them. When I finally remembered them and looked up to see what they were doing, not a child was to be seen. I went into the house to look, and smelt something burning. I ran up to the nursery; when I opened the door I was met by a great blast of such hot air that I thought the house was on fire. I screamed and Mademoiselle ran to the rescue, and we went in. Such a sight, and oh! such a smell. There was a roaring fire in the big sheet iron stove, on top of

which were four pairs of little shoes burned to a cinder, and smelling dreadfully. An ink bottle had been tipped over on the floor, and the water pitcher emptied on it in order to wash it up. The twins were dipping the bathing sponges in the ink and water, after which they scrubbed themselves and the furniture, with perfect impartiality. The two older ones had vanished entirely leaving this note on my desk."

Madame was half laughing and half crying by this time, but the grave, careworn expression on her husband's face only deepened, as he read the following epistle :

DEAR LITTEL MARMY :

We got our chews wetted and put them on the stuv to dry. Eye billed the fire all my loneself.

Ure luvin son,

HENRI.

"Marie was as cross as a bear, and wanted to put them in bed for punishment, and Mademoiselle was so horrified at the note that she wanted to make them write a composition, but I said we had trouble enough already, and I would not have them punished. But I am sure I don't know what I shall do with them; you have no idea how mischievous they are. Last night the Lavalles called here, and you know how fastidious and refined they are? What should Henri do but shout from the top of the staircase to me in the parlor entertaining them :

"Oh, little marmy! little marmy! come up here quick, I've found a bug in my bed."

"Mademoiselle went up at once and found a large June beetle there.

"The Lavalles tried to laugh as if it were funny but I could see that they were utterly disgusted. You remember last Sunday when we were speaking of the music at High Mass and I said what a pity it was that Mr. Brown's voice was so prominent, and off the key, that it spoiled it all? Well, he called yesterday and, I think, was coming to offer his assistance if you needed it, but both children were on the veranda, and the moment he appeared they shouted:

" 'Oh, Mr. Brown! my mamma says you spoil all the music at mass, you sing so awful.' "

"I ran out in dismay to stop them. He made the stiffest kind of a bow and said: 'As you were not in, he would call again,' and his face was as red as red could be. I could only say:

" 'Oh! oo! oo!' in my dismay, and Henri said:

" 'You did, mamma, you know you did.' "

"After he had gone I called them in and told them that they were making us so much trouble with their mischievous talk, that we should have to go away, and give up Regalia altogether, and the dear little things really got crying when they saw me cry, and clung around me promising all sorts of things——"

Here she was interrupted by the pair in question, racing round the corner of the house, full tilt, followed more slowly by Jacques, who was grinning as usual. Elise, our heroine, was the older of the two, by two years. She was very like her father; a tall, slender brunette, with long, black hair, in two heavy braids hanging down her back. With crimson cheeks, and flashing eyes, she dashed up the steps. Henri was of a much more studious and quiet nature. He stooped a little. His grey-blue eyes were dreamy and full of kindliness. He ran up the steps after his sister who began:

"Oh papa! Henri is an awful naughty boy. He built a fire right in the middle of the long barn floor."

Elise whose guilty conscience made her feel that trouble was brewing, thought it wise to take the initiative.

"Well!" said Henri, slowly, "you see we were playing soldiers, and that was the camp fire. I didn't suppose it would do any harm. Jacques says soldiers always have a camp fire. I did not think it would burn the barn, papa, until Jacques ran in and put it out. Elise wanted to light it, and when I wouldn't let her, she bit me hard as ever she could."

The father looked at Elise, who, conscious of having been dishonorable in the matter, blushed scarlet, but replied:

"Oh! oo! oo! papa, I did not, my mouth was open, and he ran right into it!"

By this time Jacques was doubling up with suppressed laughter, and Madame turned her back and looked intently into the house. The master looked very sadly at the pair and said:

"That will do, children, you may go upstairs to Marie."

The pair without another word, walked up the stairs much more subdued by the evident trouble of their father than the fear of punishment.

"Well, Jacques!" said the master turning to him suddenly.

"Please, massa, M. Gabriel sen' dis yer letter, and will come berry soon hisself, and massa—dey say,——" here he stood embarrassed, first on one foot, and then on the other.

"Well, speak out!"

"Dey all say Mosby and his boys are comin', and we'd better skip."

The poor boy grew pale with terror, and glanced over his shoulders, as if already he was in the clutches of the enemy.

"Massa," said the boy hesitatingly, "dere is a cave ober dere on de hill, where we kin hide."

"A cave!" said the master. "What cave? how is it I have never heard of it before?"

Jacques hung his head in silence. The fact was that in the extremity of the moment, he had re-

vealed a secret hiding place of the runaway slaves. M. de la Roche little knew that on his estate there was a large cave well provisioned and furnished with all that was needful for a siege, and that it had been a favorite rendezvous of the negroes for many years past. Seeing, however, the embarrassment of the boy, he said kindly :

"Never mind, my boy ; I think we are not quite driven to that extremity as yet, but you may get out the cart and carry the trunks. Mademoiselle will show you down to the boat landing. You had better go with us down to New Orleans, and I will find a home for you somewhere."

"Thanks, massa," said Jacques with a very unhappy face, touching his apology for a hat, and the master went into the house with his letter.

While he was reading this, let us follow the older children upstairs to the nursery. It was evident that better discipline prevailed here, for they entered softly, and were quite obedient to the directions of old Marie, as she prepared them for the night. Henri knelt for a long prayer, in which he audibly, and carefully brought in all the relatives on both sides of the family. Elise stood by the window looking out rather soberly, but in deep thought, not seeing anything. At last she drew from her bosom a gold medal suspended from a slender chain around her neck. She gazed lovingly at it, with her eyes full of tears, and then kissed it fondly.

"Mother Mary," she murmured softly, "I was mean and naughty to accuse my little brother and papa was ashamed of me. Sweet Mother, pray for your child that she may never do anything to make papa ashamed again."

Here her attention was called to her brother's delinquencies, and she exclaimed, as he rose from his knees:

"There, Henri de la Roche, you never said: 'God bless Aunt Marguerite!'"

"Oh, well!" said Henri stoutly, "I'm going to write to her."

"Be quiet, children," said Marie, and soon they were lost in the quiet, peaceful sleep of childhood.

Shortly afterward, the master of the house entered the nursery. He went to the beds of the little sleepers and gazed on them tenderly, but oh! so mournfully. How sweetly and tranquilly they slept: little they dreamed that this was the last night of their happy family life. Little even does their father know of the cross to which they are going or how could he bear it. Let us thank God for mercifully screening the future from us. "We are always traveling toward a cross."

"Well, Marie," said the master after a moment of silence, "we must leave to-night; are you ready?"

"Let us bress de Lord, massa! I'se allus ready; but jus' wait a bit and de whole ting will blow ober."

"No, old Marie, there is no hope of that, and no

time to be lost. I wish we had left yesterday; but do not let your mistress know that I am anxious. I will let you know when the steamer comes in sight. Then you may dress the children, and bring them down to the landing. Mademoiselle will look after Henri and Elise, and I know you will take the best care of your babies. We can trust you fully, and I don't know what we shall do without you. When we get to New Orleans, you will find your sister."

"Bress your heart, massa! I don't want no sister; ef you and Miss Elise goes North, old Marie goes too, sure enuf, but I tinks it's all foolin' atter all."

"Well, Marie, God grant you may prove right, and if we come back to our own again, we shall claim you as one of the family."

"To be shore, massa," said the old woman curtesying respectfully, and then turned busily to her work.

All through the night they toiled, packing and sending off necessary articles, hiding others, till they should return again when the war should be over.

The estate under the present regime was almost worthless. M. de la Roche was indeed poor and destitute, with wife and little ones dependent on him, yet he was in peace, for he had learned to say with St. Ignatius:

"Give me Thy grace and Thy love, I desire nothing more."



CHAPTER II.

THE CAVE.

IN the gray light of the early dawn, before the sun was fairly up, the family were assembled at the riverside. The broad river was wrapped in an uncomfortable mist which, however, was beginning to lift. The steamer lay puffing and blowing, in the middle of the bay, formed by a curve of the river, on which Regalia lay and was dimly visible. The little group of passengers seemed to feel the chill, and that nameless discomfort which attacks our sensitive bodies at that dull, grey morning hour. At least to the older ones it added another shade of discomfort to their downcast hearts. But the children—God bless them, nothing saddens them—they were capering with delight at the thought of a journey. Out in the river the steamer lay waiting for passengers as was the way of Southern steamers and cars in those days; stopping to take up freight, and passengers, wherever, and at whatever time they found them. A large flat-bottomed lighter was already unloading baggage to the hold of the steamer,

while a boat of lighter build, manned by four sailors and an officer, was waiting at the boat-landing for passengers.

M. de la Roche helped his wife who, as she stepped in, instinctively grasped Henri's arm. The boy, young as he was, put his arm around, as if to protect her, and stepped proudly into the boat with her, then came old Marie with the two babies. The officer then said it was enough and that he would return for the rest. M. de la Roche decided to wait and be the last to leave. At this decision, his wife shrieked convulsively, and demanded to be put ashore.

"Better come now, sir," said the officer impatiently, and the master telling Mademoiselle he would be back for them directly, stepped into the boat, and they were off.

Elise was not very well pleased at this, but she resolutely put back the rising complaint, and forced a bright smile for her beloved father as he looked back anxiously at her. How little did they dream of the weary length of time before their eyes would meet again.

Hardly had the boat reached half the distance between the landing and the steamer, when shouts were heard, and M. de la Roche, turning his head, was frozen with horror, to see a band of mounted guerillas riding down to the boat-house, aiming their rifles at the boat as they rode.

Mademoiselle, Elise and Jacques were standing a little to one side of the landing, under the shelter of an old willow, and were not seen by the guerillas.

"Hi, Marm'selle!" said Jacques in a hoarse whisper, "Run! run for your life!"

He caught Elise by the wrist, and, Mademoiselle catching the other, they ran along the bank of the river, shaded from view by the friendly embankment, and willows. As to those on the boat, the sailors rowed them quickly around the steamer, and regardless of the entreaties of the distracted father, hauled their passengers and the boat quickly on board, and then steamed off down the river, leaving the poor fugitives behind. They were not discovered by the guerillas, who thought all the family were on board the steamer, and after they had fired a few shots after the retreating boat, turned to pillage and burn the fair mansion which had been the pride and glory of the country for nearly a century.

In the meantime Mademoiselle and Jacques ran quickly along the shore of the river, dragging and pulling poor little Elise between them. The child, wholly unable to comprehend what had happened, tried to pull herself away and finally began to scream indignantly.

"Hush! hush! lile Missy," hissed Jacques, "dem bad men will cotch us."

"For the love of God, Elise, be quiet!" gasped the terrified governess.

Awed and silenced by the terror of her companions Elise submitted. They ran quickly along the shore until they came to a little stream which emptied itself into the river from the hills; then they turned and followed up the brook. This little stream flowed down through a deep gorge between the hills and the gorge was so narrow that their only path was the bed of the brook. Up this they fled, jumping from one stone to another, the rocky sides of the gorge rising to the height of twenty or thirty feet.

The stones in the bed of the brook were covered with moss, and very slippery, and our poor refugees stumbled, slipped and staggered on, until finally poor little Elise fell flat in the stream. Jacques soon had her out again, and Mademoiselle again taking her other hand, they scrambled together up the gorge until they arrived breathless and panting at the top. Here they found a natural basin worn out of the rock by a waterfall of some twelve feet in height. This had always been a favorite resort of the family, and a more beautiful spot could hardly be imagined. The rocky sides, rising almost perpendicularly around it, were covered by wild roses and other creeping vines. M. de la Roche had delighted in laying it out as a grotto of our "Lady of Lourdes." Without disturbing the natural beauty of the place, rustic seats had been built about the basin, and on a projection of the rock in the centre of the falls was a lifelike statue of the Blessed Mother, with the falling water

behind it, like a fine lace drapery. The bottom of the basin was paved with many colored stones. The silence, the coolness, and the music of the water falling into the basin were most grateful to the poor panting refugees. But there were also other resources in the place, quite unknown to the family, yet quite well known to the negroes of the various plantations around the country. Jacques hesitated a moment before revealing the secret, but a distant shout and cracking of the bushes decided him. Catching up Elise in his arms he said in a hoarse whisper :

“Follow me, Marm’selle, and do just what I do.”

He then sprang up on the ledge of the rock, close to the fall, and catching hold of a projecting root with one hand, and holding Elise tightly in his other arm, he deliberately swung himself with Elise on his arm right through the falls and out of sight, Mademoiselle was struck dumb with amazement. She knew not what to do, but her charge had disappeared, and she must try to follow at any cost. The distant shouts now sounding nearer, nerved her to the trial, and she followed Jacques’ example. There was the stunning blow of the water taking away all her breath for an instant, and then she found herself standing on a dark wet platform of rock under one side of the fall, which fell like a curtain behind her. Jacques stood beside her still holding poor Elise. The child seemed only half conscious

now, and her little head lay on Jacques' shoulder. She was moaning faintly, stunned from the fright, exhaustion, and water. Jacques laid her in Mademoiselle's arms and placed his shoulder against a little door in the rock formed by upright logs. It swung back, and with a sigh of relief he went through, followed by Mademoiselle, supporting Elise.

Mademoiselle uttered an exclamation of astonishment at the sight before her, but the child as she regained her consciousness began to scream violently, to the alarm of Mademoiselle and Jacques, who feared she would discover their hiding place to the guerillas.

"Papa ! papa !" she screamed, "I want my papa. How dare you take me from him, and bring me up to this dreadful place?"

Mademoiselle in vain tried to reason with her ; she threw herself on the floor of the cave in which they now found themselves, and only screamed the louder. At last Mademoiselle kneeling at her side, drew from her dress a crucifix and pressed it to the child's lips. The effect was instantaneous, Elise immediately became quiet and only clung to Mademoiselle trembling all over with cold and excitement.

"Oh, why are we here?" she exclaimed, "why did we not go with the others?"

Mademoiselle drew her down on an old log and explained to her why they had to run away, and bade her listen to the shouts of the wicked men, who, if

they had caught her, would have carried her away from her papa forever, and that now the only way by which she could hope to rejoin him, was by quietness and obedience.

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" sobbed the poor child, "I cannot stay here, I am afraid; indeed, indeed, I can't," and as she looked around her, her teeth chattered together and she shook from head to foot.

"They wandered in deserts and caves of the earth, of whom the world was not worthy," said the governess impressively. Weeping silently, Elise clung to her. "Do you remember, dear, our last catechism lesson when, as we were talking of the saints, you said you would like to suffer something for God? See! He has heard your prayer. He has given you the chance, and at the same time provided you with a safe shelter from the wicked."

"I forgot that," murmured Elise. "I will be good, indeed I will."

In the meantime, dear reader, we have nearly forgotten to tell you what kind of a place it was, in which our fugitives had found a refuge. It was a large cave in a hill which overlooked the plantation. The side of the hill looking towards the mansion formed a precipice, which was covered with undergrowth and vines and this made one side of the cave.

The entrance under the fall was planned by the negroes and had entirely escaped the observation of the whites, but it had been a safe refuge for the run-

away slaves, and general rendezvous for the negroes for many generations. In the side toward the precipice were many large fissures, which acted as windows to the cave, letting in air and light. They were screened from observation from the outside by vines and shrubs. The floor of the cave was of pure white sand. A fireplace, partly natural, and partly contrived by the negroes, was at one end, and while Mademoiselle was trying to quiet Elise, Jacques had busied himself in lighting a roaring fire. Over their heads were poles placed across the roof of the cave and on these were hung some ham, bacon, and dried fruit. There were also some soldier's blankets thrown carelessly in a corner. A wooden box, whose lid was hung on leather hinges, formed a cupboard which contained coffee, sugar, and other sundries. Some attempts at rough seats and tables showed that it had been lately occupied.

Jacques fastened up a blanket across a corner by the fire as a screen, and Mademoiselle with a "Deo Gratias" drew the little girl behind it, took off her wet clothing, and then wrapped her in a dry woolen blanket. She made a little mouth of disgust at this but was so thoroughly chilled as to be glad of its grateful warmth. Jacques soon had some hot coffee, which, with some pilot bread and fried, bacon formed a substantial breakfast, which they greatly needed. Jacques carried his to the side of the cave where he could look down through the fissures on the mansion

as he ate, and when he had finished, he came back, and stood gazing into the fire in a desponding attitude, with his hands in his pockets.

"I dunno what wese gwine to do," said he to Mademoiselle. "Dem villyans is boun' to stay while dere is anything at all lef' to eat, and Massa bees waitin' for us and we cawn't stay here forebber; now kin we?"

"We cannot stay here long, surely," said Mademoiselle, "and M. de la Roche must be terribly anxious. Don't you think we could steal out after dark and in some way get to New Orleans?"

"Dere's de small boat if dem villyans doesn't take her," said Jacques. "Wese could row down to N'Orleans in a couple ob days I reckon," said Jacques looking very wise and important.

"Well, Jacques, I must think a little first," said the governess.

Mademoiselle had been but a few months in the family, she knew none of the people on the neighboring plantations, and had had but little experience of life. Too much novel reading had made her romantic and impractical. The thought that she could take refuge in the neighboring plantations did not seem to occur to her although the South is justly celebrated for its hospitality, and the weaker sex sure of protection amongst her chivalrous sons. The plan she afterwards suggested to Jacques had the attraction of romance, and really seemed to her the

wisest, and the only plan, in fact, which seemed to her practicable. She told the children that they would disguise themselves as negroes, and in the early morning while the soldiers were sleeping, they would steal out, take the small boat and start down the river for New Orleans after their friends. "Perhaps," she said, "we shall meet them returning for us."

The children were delighted. The idea of the masquerade, and that of going down the river together on an unknown voyage of exploration as it were, made them forget all their troubles, and put them in the highest of spirits. Jacques assisted the governess in spreading and drying the wet clothes before the fire, and also kept up a roaring fire in the fireplace, for the cave was rather damp and chilly. Elise, who was wrapped like a mummy in her blanket, kept him in a perpetual giggle, with her bright, quick ways and speeches.

"Oh Jacques!" she said, "Isn't it just like a story, real adventures you know, like our books. If Henri had only stayed too. I wonder what he did when they fired those guns; the poor little marmie must have been nearly frightened to death. And old Marie, imagine how she must have scolded, and then she would be so sorry to leave us behind."

She was silent at the thought of the father's anxiety, and looked forward with loving impatience to clasping her arms round his neck, and bringing

the light to his eyes once more. The rest of the day was spent in trying to restore their traveling dress to respectability, in making the finest dinner that the circumstances afforded, and in exploring the mysteries of the cave. As it became dark, Mademoiselle insisted on her pupil retiring to rest as usual. Elise consented very reluctantly, and was soon in a sound sleep on a heap of pine boughs, covered with a blanket.

"Now, Marm'selle," said Jacques in an excited whisper, when he saw Elise was fairly off. "Mammy Thomson won't gib nottin' t'all to me unless youse goes wid me, and den we git de cloes, and start fust ting in de mawnin'."

Mademoiselle consented with a sinking heart, she saw no other way. The way Jacques led her out, was different from the one by which they entered. It led through one of the great fissures of the rock. After climbing through, following Jacques, she found herself on a narrow precipitous path, which she would have supposed it impossible to attempt at another time. The darkness now proved merciful, and concealed from her the dangers of the way. Following closely on Jacques' footsteps they at last reached the bottom of the cliff in safety and were soon at Mammy Thomson's door.

Old Mammy Thomson had not followed in the stampede of the negroes. Her master was the owner of a large neighboring plantation and a well

known Confederate leader; this prevented her being annoyed by guerillas. Her little hut was built under the overhanging bank of the river.

"De Lord have marcey!" she exclaimed as she opened the door and stood gazing out on them, lamp in hand, "I tought you been and gone Norf," and then with a frightened look she added: "Whar's de massa an' de missis?" in the meantime, pulling Mademoiselle and Jacques in hurriedly and shutting the door. "Dem soldiers are up to de house, rarin' and tarin' awful to hear."

Mademoiselle soon explained matters and begged for a disguise. "De pore chile, shore I'se proud to gib yer anything I hab."

She ran to a wooden chest at one side of her hut and began to pull out all her Sunday clothes. Mademoiselle had some difficulty in persuading her that these would not do, and she finally let them depart with a couple of old calico wrappers, sun bonnets and some gay bandanna handkerchiefs. Mammy accompanied them to the door with loud exclamations of pity and dismay, and with strongest assurances of being as secret as the grave, which promises she kept only too well as the sequel will show.



CHAPTER III.

CONFIDENCE.

POOR little Elise awoke with a start from her bed of moss and boughs. At first she thought herself at home in the nursery, but the strange feeling of the bed drew her attention. She put out her hand and felt the coarse blanket round her. Gradually the events of the preceding day came back to her mind.

Where was she now? Where was Mademoiselle? A bat skimmed round the cave and brushed her cheek.

She screamed a little at this, and then called: "Mademoiselle!"

There was no response.

"Mademoiselle, dear Mademoiselle," she cried plaintively, and timidly, "Here's Elise."

Only the awful silence and darkness! Was she then alone in this dreadful place? A great terror seized her. The terrible darkness seemed pressing her down. She had never before been alone in the dark, and for an instant her reason seemed to leave

her. Springing from the bed she ran shrieking through the cave but was brought to a stop by running with such violence against its rocky side that she was thrown stunned and breathless to the floor. As she recovered her senses and looked up she saw a flicker on the roof of the cave, from the fire of the guerillas outside, which caught her attention, and she remembered the danger of making a noise, which might betray the hiding place to them.

Shivering and wringing her hands, she rose on her knees, and moaned aloud:

"Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do?"

As she glanced out the opening, through which the fire flickered, she saw a solitary star shining down on her, and as she gazed, she felt a sweet peace steal into her soul, quieting her fears and excitement.

"Sweet Mother, Oh! Sweet Mother, pray for me," she cried fervently, and folding her hands together she repeated the "Our Father" from the bottom of her heart, and immediately she heard the interior call to confidence.

"If papa or mamma, or even Henri were here," she said to herself, "you would not be afraid, and have you not the Elder Brother in your heart, and your Guardian Angel at your side, Elise? If I could only see, and feel you, dear angel, I would be so glad, but I know, just the same, that you are here taking care of me. I will not be afraid."

Drawing again her medal from her bosom she kissed it, murmuring: "Be thou a mother to me."

A great happiness and content filled her little heart and she laid her head against the rock where she could watch the star.

When Mademoiselle and Jacques returned, they found her there sleeping tranquilly on the floor of the cave. They lifted her, without her waking, and laid her again on the bed of moss.

Without her faith, there is no doubt that the child would have received a severe nervous shock of which she would have felt the consequences for the rest of her life or perhaps have lost her reason. Her precious life had been so carefully sheltered, her highly excitable, and naturally imaginative temperament rendered her wholly unfit to bear such a terrible strain on nerves and courage. But her faith, and the consciousness of the unseen world about her, were so real and vivid, that she had not the slightest doubt of the presence, the love and protection of God, and the angels and saints. They were as real to her as the members of her home family. She had been most carefully taught, through means of the sacraments, that "it is of faith that God dwells in the innermost heart of man," and, child as she was, she had learned to seek and converse with Him there. Also, that "we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses," and that precisely as with her friends on earth, so could she

find comfort and aid, by an appeal to the great company of the "Church Triumphant." Consequently, she had not only escaped unscathed from this trial, but also her faith was strengthened and purified, and her whole soul elevated to a higher point than before.

"Pore lile Missy," as he assisted Mademoiselle to lift her, "Ef I was lef' hyar alone I'd be mos' skeared to def."

"Of what would you be afraid?" said Mademoiselle. "There is nothing here to hurt you."

"I'se be afeard of ghostesses, wen I'se in de dark," said the lad glancing out at an opening in order to reassure himself. "Once I saw one truly, Marm'selle."

"Nonsense, Jacques," was the response.

"Tru's I'se bawn, Marm'selle. I was libbin' den wid Boss Raynor on dat cotton pickin's twenty miles back fum hyar an' in de time ob de pickin' he'se used to hire a lot ob culled fellers fum de odder plantations, an' dey all sleep under de shed. I'se a lile feller den, an' lib wid de odder chilluns long wid Marm Nance who brung us up. I was mighty tickled wen de obberseer said I was big enough to run errands fer 'im an' de men, an' I mus' join de gang, but I soon foun' t'was no fun. Running all de day in de hot sun made me awful sick, so I crept into my bunk soon as we was let off. I went to sleep right away, but pretty soon I

was woke up by an awful voice and it kep' a callin' out:

" 'Jacques, Jacques.' I looks up, and dere shure's I'se bawn was a great big shinin' face wid a grinnin' mouf as big as my head, full ob big teeth, big as my fum. I'se hid my head under de blanket but 'twas no use; it came up right side ob me, and said wid a big screech: "

" 'Jacques, Jacques, I wants your lungs and libber! I'se gwine to eat your heart out.' Wid dat I gabe one yell and runs for Marm Nance: and wen I'se got inter her cabin, I fell down dead. She was awful good to me and wen next day de obberseer cum wid a big strap, and say 'I was only shamming,' she shet de door in he face and says 'I was too sick an' shouldn't go wid him, an dat's all about it.' "

"But Jacques," said Mademoiselle, "that was not a ghost only some bad men with a 'Jack O Lantern' who wanted to scare you."

"So Marm Nance say, but I dunno," said the boy mysteriously. "Wen de obberseer go way, I'se feared he'd make me go an' I cut out de back door, and down by de big gate, where dey cawn't fin' me, an' by-em-by Massa Henri and de Mistis come ridin' by on horseback. Oh! dey did look fine! an' wen Mistis saw me she stop, and den Massa Henri he stop too, and dey ask, 'wat's de matter ob me?' an' I'se dat sassy dat I up an' tells em all about it, an de Mistis she look awful sorry, an' she say:

“‘Oh, Henri! and he is just the age of our lad,’ an’ den dey talks a lile an’ den dey turns an’ rides up to de house. When dey comes back agin de Mistis smile on me like an angel an’ she say :

“‘You’s gwine to be our boy now fer we’s bought you an’ you can come ober an’ lib wid us at Regalia.’

“I tried to put on my manners an’ tank her kindly but fust ting I knew I bust right out cryin’ like a big baby an’ dey rides away. I ran up an’ tell Aunt Nance and she’s glad too, an’ she say I better be off before dat obberseer come agin an’ she gib me a big hunk of corncake to put in my pocket an’ start off. I walks all day an’ wen de night come I got hyar an’ de Mistis say she awful glad I come to Regalia an’ you know de res’, Marm’selle, how I goes to catechism class and learns to read an’ spell jes like de wite chilluns and ebberybody’s good an’ fore de Lord I’ll work till I die for Marse Henri an’ de Mistis.”

Here Jacques made a sudden plunge to the other end of the cave and Mademoiselle was soon reassured of his sleep by the sound of his snoring.



CHAPTER IV.

RELICS.

ELISE woke the next morning very early, it was so early that she could hardly see across the cave through the dim light of the morning. Mademoiselle and Jacques had wakened her by their movements in stirring about the cave. They were already at work, rolling up the clothing in tight compact parcels, which they covered and tied up in gay bandanna handkerchiefs.

"Oh Mademoiselle!" said Elise sitting up, as she recalled her fright of the previous night. "Where were you last night? I called, and called, but you did not answer," and she looked at her reproachfully, her eyes filling with tears at the memory of her friend's desertion.

Mademoiselle stopped her work, and with a smile crossed the cave and sat down by the child's side, and putting her arm around her looked down in her face with a glance full of love and pity. The governess had a typical French face. Very thin, with a

dark clear complexion, an aquiline nose and black flashing eyes. Her eyes, combined with a very bright intelligent expression, were the only features which redeemed her face from great plainness. She was slight and erect in form, full of energy and decision in all her movements, and as she was French, "it goes without saying" that her clothing, and wardrobe were always in perfect taste and fitness. She was fond of children, and always succeeded in winning their hearts, and in consequence was a good teacher, imparting to her pupils her own good principles of solid virtue and honor. The slight shade of down on her upper lip, covered an exceedingly sweet smile, and seemed only to add strength to her character.

"My darling," she said, "I could not bear to leave you, but it was necessary that I should go with Jacques to old Mammy Thomson's to get something for us to wear, which would hide us away from the wicked men. If we are to get away and find papa, we must put on these things and go quickly before the bad men wake up." As she spoke she held up the wrapper.

"Wear that dirty thing," shrieked Elise. "That old wrapper! I will never put that on."

Mademoiselle said nothing, but began to put on her own disguise, and the children were soon shouting with laughter to see the trim Frenchwoman in a slovenly bright red wrapper, and a pink calico sun-

bonnet which came far over her face. Elise picked up the despised wrapper, and looked at it again, it was of dark blue calico, and really quite clean. The sunbonnet provided for her was also of calico, and bright yellow.

“At any rate they’ve been washed since any one wore them,” she said doubtfully to herself, and then in a low tone: “‘They wander in sheep skins and goat skins being in want, and distress.’ You’re a proud thing, Elise, I hope the day may not come when you will be glad to get an old wrapper. I had much rather have a respectable sheep skin though,” she added, as with a comical glance at Jacques she thrust her arms into the blue wrapper.

After she had finished they all knelt for their morning offering, and ended with a fervent “Pater” and “Ave” for protection, both for themselves, and the dear ones, and that they might meet again in safety. Then they arose, and after a hasty meal from the remains of yesterday’s provisions, left the cave.

Jacques had already carried the bundles down to the boat and now returned. He kept tight hold of Elise in going down the face of the precipice and, at last, with many a hair-breadth escape from a slip which would have proved fatal, they reached the bottom in safety. When they reached the boat, the broad river was sparkling in the clear light of the

morning, and all nature seemed to speak of hope and success for their journey.

Mademoiselle entered the boat, closely followed by Elise; they sat down together in the stern, and Mademoiselle wrapped her traveling shawl around them both, for the morning was chilly. Jacques gave the boat a vigorous push, and jumping in himself, they were afloat on the great Mississippi.

"Mademoiselle," said Elise, after they had floated some time in silence down the river. "I wish you would tell us about your relics now, you said you would some time, last Sunday, didn't she Jacques?"

"I dunno," said Jacques looking rather sheepishly. He would quite as soon have excused her from the task.

"Oh! I remember," said Elise severely you were not there, "and you stay away very often, Jacques, you are not a very good boy, and sometimes make Henri naughty too."

"Don't neither," said Jacques sullenly.

"Where were you at confession last time?" said his inexorable tormentor.

"Please, lile Missy, didn't go las' time," said Jacques in some confusion, "Was off on possum hunt."

"That will do Elise," said Mademoiselle. "I will show you the relics, and we will talk of the saints, and beg of them to obtain for us favor and success on-our journey."

Drawing a little satin bag from her satchel, she showed them a little silver reliquary.

"This one is from St. Vincent de Paul," said she.

Elise took it, and kissed it reverently.

"Tell me what you remember of him Elise?" said Mademoiselle.

"Oh! I can remember about him," said Elise brightly. "He was a poor boy brought up on a farm. When a young man, he was taken captive by some pirates, they were Mahomedans and they sold him as a slave. You said his troubles made him a saint, now we are in trouble too, do you think, perhaps, we shall be saints Mademoiselle?"

"If we use our troubles rightly, and correspond faithfully with the grace of God," said Mademoiselle her eyes filling with tears.

"Mighty big change fer some of us," said Jacques under his breath.

Elise glanced at him scornfully, and then went on with her story :

"He was sold from one master to another, and had many sorrows, and humiliations. He always remembered the Sacred Heart of Jesus and was always talking to Him in his heart about His cross and passion till at last he became like Him ; loving, humble, and patient."

Elise paused as she remembered the scenes her quick and naughty temper had caused. "I shall

never be like that," she sighed, "but I'm glad now that we are wearing the clothes of a slave, it is like Him. Oh! I like to wear them now and to be homeless and a wanderer."

Mademoiselle smiled at the little girl's enthusiasm, and pressed her hand.

"Let me see," the child continued, "He was at last sold to an apostate; and his wife, who was a Mahomedan became converted by hearing St. Vincent sing hymns. She asked the saint to tell her of his faith, and then persuaded her husband to return to his religion. After their conversion, his master and his family took St. Vincent with them and they crossed the sea in a little boat, and came to Rome; that too was like us, wasn't it Mademoiselle?"

"Yes, dear; and may God grant us a safe and prosperous journey like theirs?" said the governess fervently.

"He afterwards founded the Sisters of Charity, the kind that wear the great, big, white flipperty-flaps about their heads."

"What grace did he obtain for his troubles?" said Mademoiselle.

"I—I don't quite remember, tell us once more," said Elise.

"Unbroken peace, and serenity," answered Mademoiselle, "as a little child in its mother's arms cares nothing for what is going on around it, so our

saint reposing in the love and power of the Sacred Heart, became utterly indifferent to the things of this world. Rising above all trouble to do the will of his Master became his only desire. Shall this be so with us, children?"

Elise in response, kissed the relic again reverently.

Mademoiselle had gone a little beyond her depth, but she understood enough to waken the glow of love within her, and her heart responded fervently.

"In the statue in the school room," she said, "he has some little children clinging to his soutane, and two in his arms."

"Yes," said Mademoiselle. "He had a great love for children. He built a home for children whose parents had forsaken them."

"Like me?" queried Elise.

"God forbid, my child. You are only separated from yours by the course of circumstances over which they have no control. You will understand it better when you see them; but now let Jacques tell what he remembers of St. Peter Claver?"

"I dunno nothin' bout him," said Jacques unwillingly.

"Oh Jacques!" said Elise reproachfully, "don't you remember the picture of the good Jesuit Father, holding the poor sick colored man in his arms? Henri said it was you, and you got mad."

"Never mind," said Mademoiselle, "if you have forgotten about it, we will go over it again."

“About three hundred years ago, the Spaniards brought over to this country many shiploads of negroes to work in the mines of South America. That was the beginning of slavery in this country.”

Elise had imbibed all her father's hatred of slavery, and began to look interested.

“The Indians had broken down under their cruel masters, and it was thought that the negroes would be stronger. It was in the seaport of Carthage, our saint lived, in the home of the Jesuit Fathers. All the saints have great hearts full of love and pity for the poor and unfortunate. The heart of St. Peter Claver was touched by the miseries of the poor slaves. The negroes were packed like animals in the crowded ships; they were often diseased, died unbaptized, knowing nothing of the truths of our holy religion. When the saint saw these poor souls, for whom Christ died, so treated, his heart was broken. He begged his superiors to let him give up his life to their service. He took a vow, which he kept faithfully, to be a ‘slave of the slaves.’”

“But, Mademoiselle,” said Elise, “he could not make himself black.”

“No, dear,” said the governess. “But a black skin does not make a slave. ‘He sacrificed his inclination.’ That is he never did what he liked to do, but always what the negroes would like him to do.”

"I should not like that," said Elise. "I do like above all things to have my own way. I don't like to obey anyone but papa, the hardest thing in the world is to obey mamma, or even you, dear Mademoiselle, but I am going to begin this minute, and be just like him, and I'm going to be awful good to you, Jacques."

Jacques sniffed incredulously, but kept his opinion to himself.

"What else did he do for the negroes, Jacques?" continued the governess.

"Got 'em lots ob good tings to eat," said Jacques. "I'se awful hungry, Mam'selle, and dere's a mighty good willer ober dere for us to eat our dinner under."

Mademoiselle was firm that they should wait until noon before landing and undoing Mammy Thomson's big hamper: but Elise found him a biscuit and took his place at the oars for a while, in pursuance of her good resolution.

Mademoiselle continued: "The poor negroes were carried from the ships to prisons, where they were treated far worse than we would treat our animals. The saint went to live with them, one might almost say. For fifty years he endured this life of slow martyrdom. Then when his body gave way and he was unable to toil any longer, he still persevered in crucifying his inclination, and even in his last illness refused to allow himself the ordinary comforts of

life. After his death the whole city rose up as one man and called him a saint. He wrought many miracles. He raised two from the dead; but the greatest of all miracles, was his humble, mortified life, persevered in for half a century. He had baptized four hundred thousand negroes with his own hand."

Mademoiselle sat lost in her own thoughts. Elise had dropped the oars and sat gazing at the relic. Who can say what St. Peter Claver was doing for her bright, loving, fervent little heart.

Jacques had finished his biscuit, and with an exclamation of disgust came scrambling over the seats.

"Hi, lile Missy! you'se drifting right onto dat snag."

"Mademoiselle," said Elise, "Mary Auger says your relic is nothing but an old rag put in a glass case."

"Dat sure nuf, sassy chile, Mary Auger," said Jacques.

"I think, children, you are hardly old enough yet to understand the full meaning of the 'Communion of Saints,' but I am very sure that Mary has the love tokens of earthly friends which she would not at all like to hear were only bits of paper, etc."

"Hi! don't she git mad?" said Jacques.

"And don't you remember how handkerchiefs and aprons were carried from St. Peter and the other

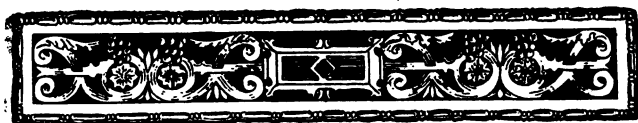
apostles, to the sick, and possessed the virtue to cure them?" added the governess.

"Papa said, that if only our spiritual eyes were opened, we would see angels all around us, and perhaps sometimes, like little Bernadette at Lourdes, the Blessed Mother. I wish mine were, I would so like to see my guardian angel. Do you think, Mademoiselle, if I prayed lots and lots as hard as I could to be 'pure in heart,' that my spiritual eyes would be open, that I may see?" said the child wistfully.

"I don' want to," said Jacques, "I'se 'fraid of ghostesses."

Then bending to his oars he began a French boat song, Elise joined in with him, and so the morning went happily on, with song and story, until at last Mademoiselle gave orders to land for rest and a dinner.





CHAPTER V.

FATHER LAWRENCE.

IN the meantime what had become of M. de la Roche and his family? We left them boarding the steamer under the fire of the guerillas. The poor little mother fainted at the first alarm, while the distracted father offered anything, any sum of money, for men and a boat to go to the rescue of his child. Perceiving that his request would not be granted, he attempted to jump into the water at the peril of his life. In this he was prevented, and was forcibly held, while the steamer, putting on all steam, went rapidly down the river.

Madame came out of her fainting fit only to go into violent hysterics, and succeeded in rousing the sympathies of all the passengers, many of whom were refugees like themselves. After all she was easily consoled; she had her husband and Henri, and was quite willing to believe the captain, when he represented to her that the child would be restored to her almost as soon as she reached New Orleans.

"Elise could always take good care of herself," she said to her sympathizers, "she is such an independent child. Dear mamma used to say 'that she could manage if she were dropped alone in China,' so different, you know, to Henri, who clings so to me. She has not much heart, I fear."

The father made no answer, but the thought of his child, far dearer to him than all the world, in the hands of the guerillas, filled his soul with desperation which took all a man's strong will to control. With the love of true friendship, which was strengthening day by day, unknown to themselves, or to the world, their souls were knit together. Elise was the only one who had any conception of the high ideals for which her father was striving. Child as she was, she grasped them, and looked up to her father, with an admiring love and confidence which won his whole heart. He was obliged to go on with his family to New Orleans, evincing apparent calm, but with a strong man's prayers, he besieged Heaven to gain safety and protection for his dear child, until at length peace stole over his soul, calming the storm, and giving him an assurance that all was well. Communion with God was his only comfort, and when not required by the needs of his family, he returned again to his interior life, until all were struck by the peace and resignation of his countenance.

They reached New Orleans about three in the afternoon, and were met at the wharf by M. Gabriel,



ELISE.

brother of M. de la Roche. He met them with relieved face, and outstretched hands.

"Well met! you are just in time," he exclaimed. "I didn't suppose you'd have so much sense, Henri. The New York steamer leaves at six. I have engaged your staterooms and was just fretting myself to death because I thought there would be no one to take them, though for that matter, there are piles of people going North, who would be glad enough to get them."

Tearfully they explained to him their troubles, which he heard with downcast face.

"Poor child!" said M. Gabriel, "I thought you were in more trouble than I expected to see, but the child will be all right, and you must go without her, Henri. We are likely to be blockaded any day and this may be your last chance to get through in safety. You can do no good to Elise by remaining here, but I can send a squad of Confederate soldiers after her in a steam yacht and bring her down in time to take the next chance for going North, after you, under the care of friends. So far from helping us in the rescue, your presence would only prove a source of embarrassment to us."

M. Gabriel spoke with some unkindness; his brother's unworldliness had always been a source of trial to him. "A want of judgment, and common sense he called it," and now seeing no sign of yielding in him, he turned to Madame, and as he turned

he saw someone coming down the wharf whom he hailed with great relief.

It was Father Lawrence.

The priest who came toward them was stout, and short in stature, with round, smooth face and light brown hair which was brushed smoothly down behind his ears. He was of Quaker descent and had inherited the sweetness and quietness of that sect. He had a most genial smile and manner; there was nothing in his dress to indicate the priest. With perfect simplicity, and total lack of self consciousness, he advanced to meet them.

M. Gabriel poured forth his story as soon as the first greetings were over, and appealed to the priest to support him. One glance between Father Lawrence and M. Henri showed to the priest all that was in the poor father's heart.

Father Lawrence stood silent, and absorbed for a few moments. He turned to M. Henri.

"My son," he said, "I fear you must go."

"Oh father!" was all M. Henri could answer, as he wrung the priest's hand, "you ask too much of me."

"Your brother is right in thinking that you should place yourself, and those dependent on you, in safety while you can do so. I myself will go with the soldiers, and take charge of Elise, as though she were my own."

M. Henri listened in anguish to this decision.

The great drops of sweat stood out on his pale forehead and a deathly faintness stole over him. His own reason, however, showed him this was the best plan, and he submitted with a sore heart. Silently he nodded his acquiescence to his brother, who hastened to put Madame and the children into a carriage, while M. Henri took the priest's arm and walked down the wharf. He had the consolation of seeing the father and some soldiers embarked in a steam yacht for Regalia before he left, and telegrams were sent to the different points to look out for the missing ones.

"Look out for her on the next New York steamer," said Father Lawrence cheerfully, as he stepped on board the yacht.

We may as well add that their search was in vain, however; Mademoiselle and Jacques had so well covered their flight that no trace could be found of them. The guerillas denied having ever seen them at all. Old Mammy Thomson's hut was overlooked in the general search. No one had heard, or seen them. They had apparently vanished from the face of the earth. A final incident to be related hereafter, gave rise to the belief that all had perished in the river.



CHAPTER VI.

THE BAYOU.

WE left our voyagers about to land at noon for rest and refreshment. The place Mademoiselle pointed out to Jacques was where a bend of the river made a little semi-circular bay. It was a lovely peaceful spot, there were no houses in sight, so that it seemed entirely secluded from observation. This was, in part, owing to the fact that the embankments were so high that nothing could be seen beyond them. Jacques landed them on a sandy beach at the foot of an old tree growing out of the embankment, and whose overhanging branches were so laden with long, grey moss, as to form a kind of pavilion for the little party. Mademoiselle seated herself on the trunk of a fallen tree, while Elise opened Mammy Thomson's hamper; and Jacques built a fire from the scattered drift wood. Mademoiselle soon became lost in painful musing; already she began to see almost insurmountable difficulties in her way. Jacques was already so tired at the end of a few

hours, that he could not hold out much longer she felt sure.

Alone, with two helpless children in a country demoralized by war, what should she do? They looked for protection to her who felt so sorely in need of protection herself.

Mademoiselle was the last of the family. She had been living alone with her mother in New Orleans previously to her engagement with M. de la Roche. She was enabled to support both by giving lessons in French, and music. Bravely she struggled, and in silence, and her mother never wanted for anything, little dreaming of the self-denial of her child, made in order to meet her desire, but that child was happy in saying after her mother's death: "She never expressed a wish that was not gratified." Well it was for Mademoiselle that the end was not long. A long sickness would have obliged her to that bitterest of all things, asking charity from others. A sudden attack of pneumonia! and then in three days all was over, and she was left alone.

After her mother's death, the kind old woman, whom the doctor had sent as nurse, drew her unresistingly to her own room, made her lie down, darkened the room and then left her that she might perform the last sad offices for the dead.

Left alone, alone in the great world! the very thought caused black numbness of despair to settle

down and stupefy the poor governess. Alone! alone in the world!—If God had only been merciful enough to take her along with her dear mother—now how could she face the terrible blank of the future? She sank into a sleep, in her great sorrow, and in her dreams she seemed to see our Lord as she had once seen him in the engraving, “Christus Consolator.” He was seated on a throne holding out his hands in blessing; while around Him was seen every kind of human sorrow, and misery holding up their hands in earnest entreaty. The mother holding up her dying child, the slave his manacled hands, famine, want, disease of every kind was represented there. Then it seemed to her, in her dream, that the Master turned and looked at her with a glance that stirred the depths of her soul as He said: pointing to the people. “Inasmuch as ye did it to these; ye did it to Me.”

Strengthened and comforted she fell into a deep sleep, and when she woke was astonished to find herself so strong, and calm. After the funeral, when all her affairs were settled, she was enabled to pay all her indebtedness, but left herself quite penniless. She had been drawn for some years, by a vocation, to become a Sister of Mercy, in the convent where she had been educated; but when she found herself so poor, she decided she must first earn herself a dowry.

She advertised for a place as governess, and was

engaged by M. de la Roche, and had been with the family about six months, when the war broke out. Now here this was ended, and she was again poor, helpless, and homeless, fleeing from unknown and consequently greater evils. Here she was aroused from these painful musings by a conversation between the two children.

"Jacques," said Elise, holding up a fried chicken, "lucky it is not Friday. Do you remember how mad you were at Marie because we had nothing for dinner last Friday but salt fish balls; they were good though, I liked them."

"I doesn't then," grumbled Jacques.

"Marie Auger says all the rabble are Catholics," said Elise.

"Oh, no!" said Jacques doubtfully. "Who am dem rabbles anyhow?"

"Well," said Elise, "I suppose she means the poor and the rough wicked people. I do like nice respectable people, don't you, Jacques?"

"Sartainly," said Jacques. "Our family is de best in de lan', and we kin hold up our heads anywheres."

Here, taking up a board, he began a vigorous tattoo with a stick accompanied with a jig, which set Elise off in a hearty burst of laughter; this performance was to let Mademoiselle know that dinner was served. Hardly had they begun their meal, when they heard voices approaching overhead.

"Remember, Elise," said Mademoiselle hurriedly, "do not speak at all, if you can avoid it; draw your bonnet over your face, and keep your eyes down on the ground."

The party approaching consisted of the owner of the plantation where they had landed, and some other gentleman who had received M. Gabriel's telegrams. Unfortunately Father Lawrence had not yet arrived. They hailed Jacques from the top of the embankment with:

"Holloa, you, what are you doing there?"

"Nottin', nottin' tall, sah," called Jacques, "only lile dinner, sah."

"Who is that with you?"

"Ony my 'ooman, an' lile gal, sah."

Here Elise recognizing the gentleman as one of their neighbors, started up to speak to him, and received a sharp blow on the ear from Mademoiselle, who simulating a rough tone shouted:

"Hyar, you Suke, sit down an' 'have yourself."

This completely deceived the seeking party, and if they had any hope before of finding the missing child, now turned away and went back leaving the little party of refugees alone once more.

Poor little Elise! she had never been struck before in her life. All the pride and passion of her nature rose out to the combat. She drew herself up, and looked at her governess with a haughty imperious air, and flashing eyes.

"How dare you?" she began, but all at once her head drooped, her eyes filled with tears, and her cheeks grew scarlet. What had so changed the child? Before her mental gaze she had seen the cruel scourging and her memory brought back the thought of the relic she had kissed that morning, with the resolution to be just like the saint who had borne the blows of his apostate master, and then the still, small voice of Him Who is meek and lowly of heart. Again she looked at her governess, and met her pitying look. The governess stretched out her arms to her, and she sprang into them, while they mingled their tears together. Then seeing Jacques looking at them in amazement, his eyes rolling in his head until the whites were visible, and his mouth wide open with astonishment, she burst into a merry laugh, so contagious, that Mademoiselle and Jacques were fain to join her, then with renewed courage they re-embarked on the long voyage to New Orleans.

"My darling," said Mademoiselle, as they again headed their course down stream, "you must be more cautious. You nearly betrayed us and would have, if the gentlemen had not turned away so quickly."

"But, Mademoiselle, that was M. Du Bois, I have often seen him at Regalia," said Elise.

"True, my child, but now you must trust me and speak to no one if you wish soon to join your parents."

Elise promised, and the governess recalling the children's conversation before dinner continued:

"Tell us, Elise, when St. John Baptist sent his disciples to our Lord to find out if he were the true Messiah, what two marks did he give them?"

"His miracles, and that the poor had the Gospel preached to them." was the prompt reply.

"Then," said Mademoiselle, "besides the four marks given in catechism, 'It is 'One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic,' there are these two additional ones, the church of miracles, and the church of the outcast, the poor."

Elise colored a little and said: "I do not mind Catholics being poor, but the bad people. Mary Auger says all our prisons and reformatories are filled with Catholics."

"'Why doth your Master eat with publicans and sinners?'" said Mademoiselle in low impressive tones, "and the Master answered; 'I came, not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance,' and also, 'they that are in health, need not a physician, but they that are ill.' Tell me, Elise, would you like Holy Mother Church to reckon only nice, respectable people as her children the Pharisees and Scribes of our day?"

Elise's look was sufficient answer, as she scrambled over the seats behind Jacques, and began to look down in the water. They were still in the bay and the water very shallow; presently Elise became greatly excited.

"Oh Jacques!" said she, "I can see fish—one, two, three."

"Dat so?" said Jacques. "By-em-by we catch em for our supper."

"Give me a line now, Jacques, and I'll troll while you row."

Jacques, who could refuse nothing to his "lile Missy," began searching for the required articles in the little cubby under the seat, and Mademoiselle drew a book from her satchel and was soon lost in its contents.

It took much time and discussion to adjust the fishing tackle satisfactorily, and in the meantime the boat drifted with the current.

Mademoiselle's attention was finally drawn by the shade and gathering gloom around her. It was grateful after the hot noonday sun, but it finally struck her that it was not just the thing. She lifted her head, and gazed around her.

"Why, children," she said, as she looked up, "where are we? Jacques, where are we? Jacques, what are you doing?"

Jacques stared round him with open mouth and comical astonishment. They seemed floating down a swift stream. Trees were on every side, and the long pendants of grey moss gave a solemn aspect to the scene. The sun was completely shut out, except where it entered at intervals, showing treacherous green hummocks, half submerged trunks of fallen trees, and dangerous looking snags.

Poor Jacques looked utterly bewildered for a moment. After glancing round he exclaimed :

"Let us bress de Lord ! Marm'selle, I'specks we'se in de bayou. I row right back agin in a minit."

But alas ! that was not so easily done. A strong current seemed drawing them irresistibly on, and whichever way they turned they found only an endless succession of creeks, forest and snags. Elise forgot her fishing, and after reeling in her line, crept quietly up to Mademoiselle and sat in the bottom of the boat with her head in her governess' lap. Two or three hours passed, and poor Jacques was utterly exhausted. Courage was fast dying out in their breasts. Once an immense cayman stuck up his long snout near the boat, and looked at them wickedly ; again a water moccasin seized the oar. They were tormented by mosquitoes, and at last Jacques laid down his oars, and burst into tears.

"Where are we, and what shall we do?" said Mademoiselle.

"Deed, I don't know," said Jacques, forcing back his tears.

"Let us all say the Memorare together," said Mademoiselle.

And together they repeated St. Bernard's wonderful prayer.

Hardly had they finished when they heard a shout, and looking up they saw a long narrow canoe propelled through the water by some Indians who were shouting and gesticulating to them.

"Merciful Heavens!" said the governess, "we are lost."

Jacques began to bawl out loud like a baby. Elise, white and trembling, clung to her governess, whispering:

"Dear Mademoiselle, shall we be martyrs?"



Rising to the occasion, the governess regained her calm, and said:

"Hush, children! have courage, and God will protect us."

As the Indians drew nearer the little party were reassured by hearing themselves addressed in French. The leader among the Indians stood up, and threw a coil of rope at Jacques, shouting an

exclamation of disgust at his cowardice, and commanded him to fasten it to his boat. Jacques, in fear and trembling, dried up his tears and obeyed. The Indians towed the boat rapidly through the water, and in less than half an hour they were floating once more on the broad river, in shelter of a quiet cove. The Indians then drew up their canoe alongside the boat.

"What are you doing? and where did you come from?" said their leader abruptly.

"We are poor refugees from the war," answered Mademoiselle, "and we are trying to regain our home and friends in New Orleans."

"And what brought you into the bayou?" demanded the Indian.

"We do not know, we suddenly found ourselves there," said Mademoiselle.

"You were drawn in by the current, and the foolishness of that big baby, I suppose," said the Indian. "Do not trust him again. Ten minutes later and you would have been lost forever in the quicksands."

Mademoiselle thanked him gratefully, and offered him money but he refused it, and tossing into their boat a fine fish, he loosed the rope, and quickly shot back into the shadows of the bayou.

Mademoiselle then took Jacques' place at the oars, for his hands were blistered, and the whole party worn out with fatigue, and excitement. But the day was drawing to a close, and she felt her strength

fast giving way. She soon decided that they must land for the night, and looked about for a place.

Alas! in plain sight was a tree, the big willow where they had dined; they had not advanced two miles down the river since then.

Silently and dejectedly they landed. Jacques dared not look Mademoiselle in the face; but as he again kindled a fire his spirits rose and soon he was chatting gayly to Elise as he dressed the shad that the Indians had given them for their evening meal.

"Yer nebber ate planked shad afore now did ye, lile Missy? Fore de Lawd it's good now, you'll see. Fust we takes a clean board like dis un":—suing the action to the word. "Den I nails de fish down on 'un flat like dat. Lucky I had dem nails in my pocket. Low, no count niggas nebber hab anyting when you want it. Den I stan's it ober de coals like dat, an by-em-by you say: 'Jacques, I nebber ate anything so good afore in all my life.'"

He then proceeded to boil the coffee, and announce formally and solemnly to Mademoiselle, that dinner was served.

He kept away from her, however, and employed himself in gathering moss and evergreen boughs for their bed. When he had finished, he went to the locker of the boat and drew forth a piece of mosquito netting which he suspended to the bough of a tree and the sleeping apartment was finished.

The ladies, indeed, in the meantime found their

meal excellent; and with grateful hearts a little later they knelt, and repeated the night prayers. Then confiding themselves to the care of their guardian angels, they fell asleep as secure as though guarded by legions of soldiers.





HENRI.



CHAPTER VII.

DEATH.

"Now, Jacques," said Elise decidedly, as the next morning they stepped into the boat to go on their voyage. "I'm going to row today, yesterday, you and Mademoiselle did all the work, and to-day it is my turn."

"Laws! no, lile Missy, I spec' I see dem lile arms of yours at dese oars. Why, you couldn't go no ways 'tall. Jes' you wait till I git goin', and kinder limbered out, and you'll see we'll be at New Orleans in jis' no time 'tall."

"I think we will not attempt to row much farther," said the governess. "At the next settlement we had better stop, and Jacques may try to sell the boat. Then we will put on our own clothes, and the money we get for the boat ought to pay our passage to New Orleans by rail."

"Hooray for Marm'selle!" shouted Jacques, swinging his hat, while Elise clapped her hands with joy; the boat had lost all its attractions now, and the children were heartily tired of it.

"De bery ting," said Jacques. "Wy didn' we tink ob it afore? But wat dat boat comin' dis way? Oh, lile Missy, look at de dude yacht comin' in. Dey looks at us, as if dey nebber see 'spectable folk afore. Sassy fellahs! Hope you'll know us nex' time you sees us."

"Keep this side, Jacques, out of their way," said Mademoiselle nervously.

"Look!" said Elise, "one must be a priest, he has a coat like one, and see they are going to land."

"Glad we'se got off fust," said Jacques.

"Why," said Elise, "don't you like priests, why aren't you more pious?"

"I didn' mean de priest, any more'n anyone else," said Jacques, "but dis wat I tink, lile Missy, and dat wat Fadder Lawrence tell us too. Dat ef I good boy, and 'bey de Church and Massa an Mistis, when I goes to mass, and tries to be kin' to ebbry-body, and not be cross, wen folks isn't good to me, dat wat de bes' religion for dis ol' fellah I tinks."

"I think so, too, Jacques," said the governess, "and let us all try to practise it now, where there is so much to try our patience."

How little they dreamed that Father Lawrence was the very priest they had just seen, and that the yacht was going in search of them, whom they had passed by, unrecognized in their negro dress. On they went, the little band of fugitives to New Orleans while the priest and soldiers searched in vain for them.

Keeping the little sermon, which Jacques preached, in mind, each strove to put away the discomfort caused by a night in camp, and to keep up courage and cheerfulness for the sake of the others, shortening the way with song, jest and story, and with many anticipations of the happy reunion in New Orleans, little dreaming that to one of their number home and heaven were so near.

It was nearly noon; they were talking of landing, and straining their eyes to see if there were any signs of a settlement around. Jacques had rowed out well into the current of the river, in order to take advantage of that, to help them on their way, when suddenly they heard coming around the bend of the river behind them the puff, puff, of a large steamer, and looking around they saw a large cotton packet bearing directly down on them. It was a broad, flat bottom steamer, with side wheels shaded something like our ferry boats, and was piled to the top of the two smoke stacks, with bales of cotton.

"Row in shore, Jacques!" screamed Mademoiselle.

The packet whistled loudly, and the men on board her shouted directions, and the commotion made poor Jacques completely lose his head. He bent desperately at his oars, and rowed them directly across the steamer's path. Mademoiselle and Elise stood up, threw their arms around each other, and closing their eyes, awaited the shock. The packet shot by so closely, that it upset the little boat, but

two men who had run forward with boat hooks, caught up the two women, and drew them on the deck uninjured, while poor Jacques was thrown into the water, and drawn under, by the big side wheel. The boat was stopped at once, and as he rose to the surface behind the boat, he, too, was caught by a boat hook, and hauled up on deck. He was quite unconscious at first, but every effort was made to revive him, and at last he gasped, opened his eyes, and tried to move.

He could not, and the effort to do so caused him to moan sadly.

It was evident that he had been badly injured by a blow from the wheel. The poor lad laid on the deck of the packet, wrapped in a coarse blanket, with his head in Elise's lap. Mademoiselle was kneeling beside him, applying the restoratives. The crew of the packet were standing around gazing at the group. The pallor of the poor black face, the sharpening features, and gasping breath, showed that death was near at hand. Overhead was the clear blue of a summer sky, flecked here and there with a fleecy cloud. The exceeding peace of the Holy Ghost rested over all the landscape. How could so dreadful a thing as death be there?

Jacques looked first at the weeping child, and then around at the others in a bewildered way, and finally said in a low frightened tone:

"Whar' is I? Oh! I remembers, I fell in de water.

Tank God we'se safe, lile Missy. I'se 'fraid I'd killed ye, but don y' cry, what for you cry so hard? Is I gwine to die?"

"Jacques, dear," said the governess in a low sweet tone, "are you willing to give up your life, if God asks you for it?"

"Oh yes," said Jacques wearily, "willin' and glad, pears like dis worl' no place for pore cullered boy like me. Seems like I don't belong nowhars or to nobody. Now Massa Henri and de Mistis gwine Norf, better I die, and go home. What was de prar,' Mamselle? I mos' disremember. What was it? 'Wen dow will, whar dow wilt, an' as dow wilt, only in de communion ob de Holy Cattolic Church, an' in perfect charity wid all mankin'.' I is dat I believ truly, and I say dat ebbery night since we learned it, Marmselle, las' Sunday——"

A moment's silence, broken by his difficult breathing, and the sobs of the women.

"How Massa Henri laugh wen I say dat to you first time, on'y las' Sunday; don' dat seem long time ago?"

"Oh Jacques!" sobbed Elise. "Don't die, please, please don't die, and papa will take you North with us. He didn't know, and we did not any of us dream you were so lonely. I know he will take you, when he hears how good and brave you have been for us."

"I'se made a good confession las' time; Fadder Lawrence he say so hissef. I went to Holy Com-

munion so I'se washed clean and am ready to go, better I goes now I tink. Massa don' want to take no no-account niggahs Norf wid him."

Just then strains of music came across the water, from another steamer going up the river with a regiment of soldiers on board. The regimental band was playing "Dixie."

Jacques smiled faintly. "Member dat walk-around on Whitsun-Tuesday, lile Missy? Massa Henri tumbled down. How Fadder Lawrence and Massa and Mistis did laugh; but you didn' fall down, you double shuffle wid de bes'. Oh! I wish Fadder Lawrence was here now, so I do," and he looked wistfully at Mademoiselle.

"Make your act of contrition, Jacques," said she tenderly, "and trust all to God, and all will be well with you."

Slowly, painfully, with many a pause, he made a fervent act of contrition, adding the acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, which Holy Mother Church puts into her children's mouths for all times, and needs.

Then Mademoiselle began the prayers for those in their agony, while Elise held the lighted candle, which a Catholic sailor brought, in the now powerless fingers. She held the crucifix to his lips whispering comforting ejaculations in his ear. He kissed the crucifix fervently and a look of joy and peace stole over his face.

"I cannot see," he gasped, "an' de water is in

my ears. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph;" one more gasp, and all was over. The governess began the "Rosary for the Dead," but was stopped by Elise, who threw herself with a terrified scream into her arms.

The captain, a New England man, now stepped forward. He had been at first greatly annoyed, and afterward puzzled by the whole occurrence. He supposed, when he saw them, that they were a party of negroes fishing, and his language was more emphatic than choice and select, when they got under his packet. He stood ready to give the two darkeys a sound scolding when they were hauled up on deck by his men, but was struck dumb, first by the delicate, refined faces, where he expected black ones, and afterward by the dying scene.

He motioned now to the sailors to remove the body, while Elise was in the arms of her governess sobbing hysterically, and shaking from head to foot. It was the first time, poor child, she had ever seen death, and she was very fond of Jacques.

"Bring the child this way, Marm," said the captain gruffly, leading the way aft, and sending for some wine.

The deck was piled nearly to the top of the smoke stacks, as we have said before, with cotton bales. Wending their way through these they came to a little space which had been left clear at the end of the boat. The captain pulled down a bale, threw a rug

across it, arranged it in a spot sheltered from the sun, and then made Elise drink some wine, and lie down on this improvised couch. He was deeply impressed by the child's grief and beauty, and the great effort she made to control herself. Seeing her at last grow more quiet, he turned to Mademoiselle, and said in exasperation :

"Now, Madam, will you be so kind as to tell me from where you have come? and who you are? and where you are going?"

Their story was soon told. The captain listened in silence, and kept his own opinion as to the sense of women, and when Mademoiselle had finished he said :

"My boat ain't no kind of place for wimen folks, and that's the whole truth, but the weather is warm, and I reckon you can't do better than manage on the deck for a night. In these times it is safer to lie to at night, and I always do; but I expect to be in New Orleans tomorrow morning at nine o'clock sharp, and I guess you better keep along with me as you don't seem to manage your own craft very well."

"And the boy?" said Mademoiselle anxiously. "Can you carry his body to the city?"

"Oh! that will be all right," said the captain.

"Thank you, more than I can say, for your kindness; we shall be grateful for your protection, and you will be well paid when we reach our friends."

"All right," said the captain gruffly, and he turned on his heel and left them.

In those days when negroes were bought and sold like cattle, their bodies after death met with pretty much the same treatment. The captain conjectured rightly that he would get no thanks for bringing the corpse to New Orleans, and had it brought out on the deck for burial, then and there. The sailors were struck by the peace, and purity of the boy's face, and the captain hesitated, when looking at it, about committing it to the water, but calling himself "an old fool" under his breath, he had the body sewed in an old sail, with a ten pound shot sewed in at the foot, and soon it was sleeping in the broad bosom of the Mississippi, until the Resurrection Day.

Poor Jacques, no, not poor, but happy, blessed Jacques! Has not the Master Himself said it: "Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh. Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you; and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Be glad in that day and rejoice, for behold your reward is great in Heaven." Surely if any one has earned the beatitude that comes from sorrow and humiliations it is the oppressed negroes and Indians of America.

Toward the end of the afternoon the captain strayed in upon Mademoiselle again. Elise was soundly sleeping, and Mademoiselle sitting on a camp stool near her. The captain stood for a

moment, looking on the sleeping child. The traces of tears were still on her cheeks, the experiences of the last two days had told on her sadly, and as she laid on the captain's scarlet rug, she looked like a broken lily, thrown carelessly down upon it. The crucifix she had used for Jacques, was still pressed to her lips, as it lay on the rug as if she were holding it there.

"Pretty child, pretty child !" said the captain, gazing at her, "awful pious ain't she?"

Mademoiselle assented.

"Catholics, both of you?"

Again a silent assent.

"Now, I was born and eddicated down on Cape Cod, in Massachusetts, and was brought up firm in the belief that Catholics were the very worst kind of folk, considerably wuss than the heathens; but I seen considerabul of em myself, sence I've been down here, and I think the pious ones are as good as any that goes. I like em to work for me bettern any others, but how any livin' creature in the name of common sense can believe, and do the things that Catholics do beats me. Excuse me, Marm, if I hurts your feelings, but that's the plain truth."

"To what things do you refer?" said Mademoiselle. "I think the Catholic Faith is rational. Perhaps what you have heard are stories made up by the enemies of the faith."

"Wal, take, for instance, the doctrine of eternal

punishment. My father used to say, and he was a true blue old Calvinist, that only those few that God had elected for heaven could be saved, and that nine out of ten men were predestined for hell, and would burn there for all eternity. Now the elect ones got a change of heart, and were awful pious when it suited em to be; but I didn't git one and had to conclude that I was among the reprobate. When I looked around among my friends, I told my father that I didn't know as I was very sorry; for the reprobates were so much more agreeable than the elect, that I was sure of better company any how."

Mademoiselle could not repress a smile.

"Now, honest and true, marm, do you, in your heart of hearts, believe that a God of love, will force anybody, however much he may have sinned here, to burn in dreadful torments for ever and ever in hell? And that for a sin which it takes but a moment to commit He will punish with an eternity of torture?"

"God destines no one, forces no one, wishes no one to be lost," said the governess, reverently. "If we are lost it is our own choice, not His. The Catholic Church has utterly condemned the Calvinistic doctrine of your forefathers, that men are elected for hell, but, oh! sir," said the governess, earnestly, "as surely as there is a city of New Orleans, so surely is there that dreadful place

where men are deprived of the sight of God for all eternity, and are in dreadful torments."

"I never before heard of any one choosing to go to hell," said the captain incredulously.

"Are you sure of that?" said the governess. "Look at the poor drunken wretches you meet and hear of daily, committing the most dreadful crimes, and not only suffering themselves but causing also the innocent to suffer. When you see such a man lost to all the self-respect which is necessary to make life tolerable, and unable to gain the esteem of others, which yet he longs for, is not such a one already in hell? As you see him lying in the gutter, or shambling through the streets with trembling limbs, aching body, and a dreadful, consuming, fiery thirst which draws him, and he knows it, farther and farther from life, light, and happiness, into that terrible outer darkness where 'the fire is not quenched, and the worm dieth not,' is he not already near his condemnation?"

"I expect he is; marm, that's a fact." said the captain, soberly.

"And would you say that God forced him into this state?"

"No;" rather reluctantly.

"Would you say that such a state could become fixed?" she continued, "so there was no return?"

"I wouldn't give much for the chance of reform for most of em," said the captain.

Yet the Catholic Church teaches that is a heresy, and that, while he lives in the world, a man may turn by the grace of God, and choose God and heaven, and free himself from the powers of darkness; that with our gift of free will, we are entirely free to choose between light and darkness here, and we choose, though not free, hereafter."

There was a little silence, while both gazed at the broad river, glittering in the sunlight.

"And yet," continued Mademoiselle in a low, fervent voice, "degrading and horrible as the sins of a sensualist are, I would far rather take my place with them at the Judgment Day than with the proud, selfish hypocrite, the Pharisee of our day, who looks out well for himself and crushes down his neighbor. Yet what am I to condemn others? Are we not all, within our souls, building either heaven or hell? What is making us bright, loving, and considerate with others, or hard, self-righteous and gloomy? God has made us for Himself, and apart from Him, there is no happiness."

"Who, then, can be saved?" said the captain quoting unconsciously.

"There is the comfort of Purgatory," said the governess.

"Comfort!" exclaimed the captain, "I thought you believed that next door to hell and almost as bad; poor comfort I should call it."

"We are taught," said Mademoiselle, "that only

those who are absolutely stainless from all sin, even those of thought, can go directly from this world to heaven, otherwise it would cease to be heaven. Is it not then a comfort to us poor sinners that there is made for us a place for purifying us, even though as by fire, from the sinful habits we have built up here? There is pain, we are taught, but there is joy and bliss far exceeding the pain in the knowledge which the soul gains at the particular judgment which comes immediately after death, that it is saved; it then learns how beautiful and good is God Whom it is to enjoy forever and never offend again, and it knows the intense happiness of being safe from offending Him Who died to save us. I think it is the sight of this that brings the sweet smile of peace we see on the faces of the dead. When people talk of going from the taint and foulness of this earth into God's presence in heaven it only shows how very little they know of the exceeding sanctity of God in Whose sight the angels are not pure."

By this time Elise had risen and was standing by Mademoiselle, with her arm around the shoulder of her governess, looking at the captain with great, solemn eyes.

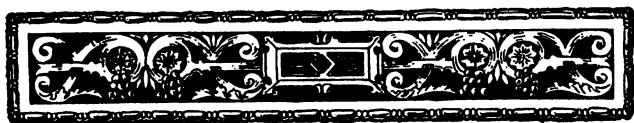
"Come with me my pretty," said the captain, "and I will give you something nice."

Elise was rather a reserved child with strangers. Mademoiselle was astonished to see her spring forward and take the outstretched hand.

"You have given me much to think of, Marm," said the captain, and I thank you." Bowing politely, he walked off with the little girl clinging to his hand.

Mademoiselle comprehended the child better, as she heard her pleading with the captain, "to go and see Father Lawrence when he got to New Orleans."





CHAPTER VIII.

RESURRECTION.

IT was a lovely summer morning in the Crescent City, not too warm as yet, for it was still early. A cool breeze was blowing off the water and came laden with the perfume of sweet flowers into the office of M. Gabriel de la Roche. The office was a pleasant room in itself, on the ground floor of what had been once an aristocratic mansion, but now it had fallen from its high estate, and was let out in offices for business men. The house was surrounded still by a garden, protected from the public street by a high brick wall. The garden was yet carefully looked after, and cultivated, and the shade of a magnificent climbing rose, kept M. Gabriel's office cool and fragrant.

He, however, did not seem to appreciate the spirit of the morning, and was plunged in the deepest gloom and despondency. He sat tipped back in his chair, his feet on the table, his hat drawn down

over his eyes, while he apparently studied the toes of his boots. The cause of this was lying open on the table before him : a telegram from Father Lawrence, which ran as follows :

“Not found ; no hope ; will be with you in the morning.”

“Most ridiculous,” he soliloquized, “they can’t have flown away, or dissolved ; and yet the priest is not the one to give way to imaginary difficulties. How shall I telegraph her father?”

A new fragrance of violets, and two little figures darkened the door :

“All a growin, and a blowin !” sang the little one, exhibiting her flower basket. M. Gabriel did not move, but snarled an inarticulate response. The little flower-sellers ventured to advance nearer, and got a shout that sent them out of the office on the run.

The next intruder was Father Lawrence himself and Mr. Gabriel rose to meet him with the anxious question in his eyes.

Father Lawrence shook his head sadly. “I fear there is no ground for hope,” said he.

“Why do you think so?” said M. Gabriel. “Sit down ; and tell me all about it.”

Father Lawrence sat down and began :

“We went from here directly to Regalia, and found Mosby and his men still there. Most of them were drunk, but some were sober, who swore by all

in heaven and earth, that they had seen nothing of the child, and I think they told the truth; we searched a little around the country but the telegrams had arrived there the day before and all had been looking for the child without avail, so we came slowly back; stopping every two or three miles to inquire, but no one had seen them. We found traces of a camp, which might have been theirs, or not, we could not tell"—here he paused and M. Gabriel said:

"Had you any reasons, which led you to think them drowned?"

"Yesterday, at noon, said Father Lawrence, opening his bag, one of the men fished out of the river this hat and this bundle. He drew out of his bag Jacque's hat, and a bundle tied up with a gray bandanna handkerchief; opening it, he showed a little grey traveling dress, with a broad hat and plumes, too easily recognized as belonging to Elise.

"But how? why?" said M. Gabriel, bewildered.

"We cannot tell, it must remain a mystery, said the priest.

M. Gabriel buried his face in hands.

"My poor child! my poor little girl!" he groaned. "Oh Father, for the love of God, take these things away, I cannot bear to see them, and come back this evening and tell me what to telegraph to her father, I must have time to think first."

"God comfort and guide you," said Father Law-

rence, as with tender, reverent hands, he replaced the articles in his bag and left the office.

"How can I telegraph Henri?" soliloquized the poor uncle. "What a message to meet him in New York, he will never forgive me for making him go on to New York. Her clothing done up in a bundle! Why was that?" and the thought of his dear little niece in the hands of the guerillas caused him to bow his head in his hands, and groan aloud.

Again two figures darkened the door of his office; slightly glancing up, he saw two beggars, as he thought, standing in the door-way,

"Nothing for you," he shouted savagely.

What a relief to an aching heart is sometimes an outbreak of temper.

The next minute he was nearly upset by a small figure springing into his arms, his hat knocked off, and himself nearly strangled by a pair of little arms around his neck, while rapturous kisses stopped his mouth.

"Oh you bad, bad uncle, how could you greet me so!" cried Elise reproachfully.

Springing to his feet, he held her off at arm's length, gasping and staring at her and Mademoiselle. The revulsion of feeling was too much for him. He could only stammer.

"Why! why! who! where! sweet mother! where did you drop from?"

Then suddenly throwing her one side, he glanced

at the clock, then rushed to the sidewalk, and hailed a passing cab. The driver hesitated, wondering if the man was crazy, but M. Gabriel did not stop for explanations but ran back to the office and caught Elise by the arm, shouting to the governess in an excited tone :

"Come, come quickly, there's barely time," and pulling them along, thrust them into the cab.

"Double fares if you reach the New York boat in time," he shouted to the suspicious cab driver. The man understood that, and lashed his poor horses, as M. Gabriel jumped in, slammed the door after him, and finally turned and demanded an explanation.

This forthcoming, he turned to Elise saying :

"Well, dear child, you have come barely in time. Your stateroom and passage are engaged on to-day's steamer, and a friend of mine going to New York, has promised to see you safe in your father's arms."

"Oh uncle !" she exclaimed, "I must have some clothes first."

"Indeed, Monsieur, the child cannot travel like this," remonstrated the governess.

"True," said he looking at her ruefully. She is in a state to be sure, and Father Lawrence carried off her clothes ; but you see your father will be so disappointed, and I don't believe there will be another passenger boat through, until this accursed war is over.

"Papa will be disappointed? Does he expect me

on this boat? Then I shall go!" said Elise, but as she glanced down on the torn, old wrapper, and at the little kid shoes, from which a naked toe protruded, her dark eyes filled with tears.

"But, my dear," expostulated the dismayed governess.

"Whyte has a child just about her age," said her uncle, "they will be sure to rig her out."

Just then they drove down the wharf on the gallop; the last gong had sounded, "All aboard," and the men had started to pull in the gang plank; they hesitated at the sight of the cab, and M. de la Roche throwing open the cab door, seized the poor shrinking child, and passed her up on the deck to a tall gentleman, calling out at the same time:

"Here she is, Whyte, just in time."

Then springing back to the wharf, the gang plank was drawn in, and the steamer slid slowly out of her mooring.

Poor little Elise; what shame are you bearing now, for the love of that dear Father! There she stood on the deck the "observed of all observers." Her blue Mother Hubbard had been wet, soiled, and torn in her adventures, until it was nothing more than a dirty rag. The yellow sunbonnet, bereft of a string, hung limply around her face and was tied to one side of the cape. The little pink toes stuck out of the kid boots, which were not made for the usage they had lately received. There she stood, alone, in the midst

of a crowd of fashionably dressed people who had been attracted by the bustle of getting her on board in time, her head hanging down, her sweet face mercifully hidden by the big sunbonnet, and so covered with shame and confusion that she could hardly see.

M. Gabriel, with a great sigh of relief got back into the cab with Mademoiselle. She, filled with admiration at the courage and generosity of the brave child, resolved to follow her example, and directed him to drive her to the Convent of Mercy, resolved not to delay for a minute longer the following of her vocation.

As they drove along, she related the story of their adventures, begged her companion to see the captain of the packet, and attend to the funeral of poor Jacques. M. Gabriel listened, with many an exclamation of surprise and thanksgiving, and left the governess at the convent door, with a sum of money in her hand that might well cover her with embarrassment.

We, too, will leave them at the convent, for never again will their lives touch that of our little heroine in the course of the story which we are telling.



CHAPTER IX.

LUCILLE.

WE left our little girl standing among a crowd of passengers on the deck of the north-bound steamer, in a very pitiable condition, in the midst of the amused and curious glances of the passengers. Standing next the tall gentleman, to whose care she had been so unceremoniously committed, stood a fashionably dressed lady with eyeglasses, and a little girl, about the age of Elise, with a French maid.

The gentleman stared at Elise, aghast and dismayed, while his wife, for it was she who was near him with the glasses, fairly glared at her through them, and then turned to her husband for an explanation, with a look that made him quail.

"Who is that person?" she said haughtily "Do you know?"

The gentleman fidgeted a little, looked about helplessly for protection, and finally said, nervously:

"Well, really I don't know, I can't tell—I think it must be Mademoiselle de la Roche,"

"That! Mademoiselle de la Roche?" said the lady.

The child glanced up at her and then around her, she felt like a hunted animal surrounded by foes. But she bravely conquered the impulse to fly and hide herself anywhere, anywhere, only to be alone; and, swallowing the great lump in her throat, she said with quiet dignity:

“Yes; I am *Mademoiselle de la Roche*, but I am a refugee, and have lost my clothes.”

This declaration, brought forth a burst of laughter from the bystanders, and Mrs. Whyte, with ill-concealed displeasure, motioned to her maid, and said:

“Take the child below for ‘goodness’ sake,’ and try to make her presentable with any thing Gertrude can spare.”

If Mrs. Whyte was annoyed at the appearance of the child, imagine the wrath of Lucille, the maid, at having, as she remarked, “two young ones on her hands, instead of one to care for.”

Lucille was one of the worst of that justly much abused class, French maids. Hardened and deceitful, as only a Catholic can be who has lost her faith and neglected her duty, brought up in a worldly atmosphere, bright and intelligent by nature, she soon learned how to please her lady—“to take the measure of her foot,” as she expressed it—and to get along with as little to do as possible, and keep a fair outside. Out of temper already, she was glad to meet with an object upon whom she could

safely vent her wrath. She gave the child a look that would have killed her, if looks could kill, and taking her by the shoulder, pushed her ahead down the cabin stairs.

Gentleness itself, as long as she was under observation, but no sooner did they reach the cabin, than she gave Elise a shake and push, which nearly sent the poor child on her face. Elise recovered herself in great displeasure, and tried to walk in a stately and dignified manner, her blood boiling in her veins, and her little head high in the air. But it is not easy to be dignified, when one is getting a continual push from behind which forces one to run, to prevent one's self from falling. Reaching, at last, the door of the stateroom, the final push sent the child in, and down on the floor.

Elise picked herself up, and, alas! lost her temper.

"How dare you treat me in this manner?" said she turning to Lucille, with a red light blazing from her eyes.

"How dare I, is it," said Lucille, "I'll let you soon see how I dare. I'll let you know, too, that I wasn't hired to care for beggar brats like you. I advise you to make yourself mighty scarce and quiet, if you know on which side your bread is buttered or you'll find yourself a pretty tame young'un before we get to New York. How dare I indeed! You bold, sassy thing. Here get out of my way," and she gave the

poor child a box on the ear that sent her away, reeling from the stateroom trunk before which she was standing, and, in spite of the protecting sunbonnet, made her quite dizzy and sick. Stunned and bewildered, Elise stood passive and motionless, without a sound, while the woman unstrapped and opened the trunk.

"Take off those rags," she hissed: Lucille always spoke in a low, often inaudible tone, never loud enough to draw attention from outside. "I'll have enough to do after the ship gets rolling, and every one gets sick, without looking after you."

The child tried to obey, but was so frightened and agitated that her fingers shook, so that she made little progress, and when Lucille had laid out some pretty clothing and stood up to put it on, Elise had not yet succeeded in removing the unfortunate wrapper. With an exclamation of impatience the maid began to twitch it off.

"Cleaner than one would expect," was the comment. "But I'm not going to look after all this hair, so the quicker it's off the better." She lifted one of the heavy braids, and drew a large pair of scissors from her side where they were hanging.

"Don't you dare cut my hair," now fairly screamed Elise, "My papa will punish you, he will be very angry indeed with you."

She pulled down the hand of the astonished maid, caught the shears from her, and threw them across

the state room through the open porthole, where they sank into the water.

Lucille, now angered beyond all bounds, threw the fragile child into the berth, pressing her face into the pillow to prevent her screaming, seized the heavy trunk strap, and gave her a most cruel beating.

There was no need of stifling her cries, for Elise was now very still and white. Frightened at last by the silence, the woman desisted, and Elise submitted to the rest of her toilet without a word. Lucille beginning to fear she had gone too far, let the hair alone, and when at last all was finished, she gave her a little push saying :

"Be off now, and see if you have learned to behave yourself."

Elise needed no second bidding ; she flew from her tormentor's hand, along the cabin and up the stairs.

People were everywhere. Oh ! where should she find a spot where she would be alone ? Along the deck she sped, and at last she found a little corner behind a life-boat, where she would be screened from observation. She threw herself down on an immense coil of rope, and buried her face in her hands.

"Papa, papa !" she moaned, while the long, shuddering sobs, shook her, convulsively, and the physical pain in her throat became almost unbearable. "Oh what shall I do ? what shall I do ?"

She felt the gentle pressure of a hand on her shoulder, as if in response, and a voice full of love, and sympathy which penetrated her heart said :

“My child, my poor child ! what is grieving you so?”

Starting up, full of shame at being discovered, she saw a nun, in the dress of a Sister of Mercy, gazing down on her with eyes full of tears of sympathy and pity. As Elise looked up, the nun held out her arms and Elise sprang into them, clinging to her new friend desperately and sobbing violently.

Sitting down on the coil of rope, the Sister drew Elise down beside her, and pressed the child's head to her heart ; the poor, lonely, little one felt a strange influence, a sensation of strength and comfort stealing over her ; and was instantly quieted. The nun's companion walked a little outside the enclosure made by the life-boat, and seating herself at the entrance to keep out intruders, opened a book and began to read. When Elise had regained her self-control, the Sister by a few well-directed questions, drew the whole story from her.

“I will never, never forgive her,” said Elise springing to her feet in excitement, her pale cheeks now scarlet, and her dark eyes flashing, “and Papa will have her discharged as soon as we get into New York.”

Without a word the nun drew the child down by her side and as Elise buried her head in the Sister's lap in a silent despair from her troubles, she felt the sympathetic tears drop on her head.

“Oh, my Sister ! how can I,” she sobbed.

Still no answer, only the mute pressure of her head against the Sister's heart, and Elise saw before her mental vision, once more, that last dreadful night of the God-man on earth; surrounded by the brutal soldiers in an underground cave; the crown of thorns; the eyes blindfolded; the reed in His hand; the coarse jeers, and taunts; "and I—and I—who was going to be a saint;" she said in an undertone. Mutely she carried the nun's hand to her face, and kissed it; not a word was spoken but all was understood. They sat there a long time in silence looking out on the water.

Suddenly Lucille appeared before them. The companion Sister rose to let her pass.

"My lady wishes Mademoiselle de la Roche to attend her at dinner," she said with an obsequious smile and courtesy.

"Yes; I will come," said the child simply and rose directly on her feet. She was rather white and unsteady, after her violent excitement and Sister Felicitas, for so we may call her, arranged her dress with loving little touches.

"May I come back?" said the child, gazing beseechingly into her face.

"By all means," said the nun, with a smile, that brought hope and courage to the child's heart.

Elise walked quietly along the deck after Lucille, her eyes were cast down, and she seemed hardly conscious of Lucille's presence. When she reached

the stairs she stopped and turned around to see if the Sister were looking after her; she was, and smiled and nodded reassuringly; the child went on with a radiant face.

"What makes you look so happy?" said Lucille, curiously.

"The Sister!" said Elise simply, "she and I are friends now, you know."

Lucille looked at her wonderingly. She kept a little behind the child muttering to herself:

"You better be cautious, Lucille, strange child this; who knows what friends she'll make next, and the nun looked at me sharp enough, to be sure."

They entered the long cabin where already the passengers were dining. Mr. Whyte had secured seats at the foot of the captain's table. The table was nearest the cabin door, and Mr. Whyte was at the foot opposite the captain; at his right hand sat his wife, with the two children directly opposite them, and at Mr. Whyte's left, were two young ladies who were returning to their home in New York after a tour South, with their uncle, a stout elderly gentleman, very precise and nervous. Lucille turned the saloon chair just below Gertrude Whyte for Elise, placed her in it, adjusting her napkin in the most motherly and solicitous manner, and then stood, deferentially, behind the two children to attend to their wants, never dreaming but that which

Mrs. Whyte whispered across the table, was anything more than was justly her due.

"Perfectly invaluable, quite a treasure I assure you."

Gertude Whyte was a very bright-looking child, with a kind and generous heart, but was very much spoiled by the misfortune of being the only child of rich parents. She turned, and looked admiringly at Elise, as she sat down, and said :

"How nicely you look in my dress." Then seeing the tear-stained face, she added : "Has Lucille been scolding you? Don't you mind, I never do. Just say you'll tell papa, and that stops her right away. I like you ever so much, and I like to have you wear my things."

"Thank you," said Elise rather faintly, and then, gazing on her intently asked : "Why do you like me?"

"Oh ! I'm sure I don't know," said Gertrude, composedly. "I always know if I'm going to like people and I'm going to make you my friend. I am going back north to school this year. You'd have something to cry for, if you were going to school."

"Why don't you like it?" said Elise, "I always wished so much that I could go."

"Just you try it, once," said Gertrude. "Did you know I kept a diary? Now I suppose you are not old enough to keep one."

"I never had one," said Elise.

"Can you read mine?" said Gertrude pulling a small sized book from her bag, which hung at her side. You know you are my friend and you may if you want to.

Oh; yes!" said Elise, "may I?"

"Yes;" said Gertrude," and that will tell you how much I like to go to school. You see I got it at Christmas and I began to keep it on New Year's Day; but I haven't written anything in it for ever so long."

The two heads bent together over the pages, and Elise read as follows:

Jan. 1.—new Years day. i am gont to kepe a dairy this year, my father says it will help you in speleng and langwidge to kepe a dairy but I dont see how it can help eny one when you can't hev it kerrected, and you can't hev it kerrected becos all youre seacrets are in it so Nobody must see it. the Girls in school all steel their dairys from each other and rede them. the other one pretends she don't want you to rede it an all the time shes jest dyin to hev you so you can tieze her about things.

Jan. 2. i wisht i dident hev to go back to school. ime hevin fun no end. . . T—— came Over to my house today, we are going back together.

Jan 3. got up this mornin, hed the tooth Ake. wisht i was dead. mamma sed i couldnt hev eny More Candy while i was at home. an it wasnt the Candy gave it to me at all it was jest thinking of going Back to school.

Jan. 7. I am back agen at school. the Girls are all here I couldnt kepe my dairry these last days because comin back hear and Every think we hed Fun las nite. ! ! !

Jan. . . . got up this mornin and went to mass the chapel was very pritty they Hed lots of flours an things i ges i got marked for lafin i doant care. so there! ! i hate this old school and my father wanted Me to get a Distingwish this Month too they Can kepe there old Destingwish.

Jan. . . . las nite me an T—— & w —— hed som sandwiches and cokanut cakes an we dident know how to get out of the dormitory to eet them But we tride and the bords creek an Sister got up an Kought us. i gess she gave us about 50 offen an she tuk all the things an said she wud give them to the poore and we hev to go to the Punish Class!

Jan. . . . i gess we're gon't to hev our reetrete by ourselves becos we Distracted the yong Ladys last year. it won't be eny fun. M— rote Me a note at Study houre and Sister tuke it. she's too smart ennyways she always nos every think. i think she red the note becos she kinder laffed.

Jan. . . . we were Skatin an T—— fell down jest when she was tryin to show off Becos Sister wos in the winda lookin out ime glad of it shes too smart i mean T—— is.

Jan. . . . the perfessor was jest as cross as he could be to-day an he mad Us sing One thing about a hundred times Over an he sed he couldent incert the pointer between my teeth! jest as if ennybody cud sing with a

mouthful of pointer ! ! ! i hate singin anyhow my father sed if Anybody could listen to me trying to sing she must have good nerve. i gess the perfessers nerves are alwright.

Feb. . . . retreat is over an we hed the best one an now ime goin to be good becos i sed i wud we hed twilite talks an every thing the young ladys hed only Ours was better an i wisht we didn't hev to go in with them eny more.

Feb. . . . lost my destingwesh again i doant care ime never Goin to try agen as long as i live i only jest put the dust brush in R——'s bed & when her feat got agenst it she screached and Sister ast who did it an i sed i did and then she marked me. . . . she likes to mark me any how She takes every chance she gets."

Here Lucille interrupted, and insisted on the attention of the children to their dinner. In the meantime their elders were also too much engaged in conversation to notice them. With an exclamation of admiration, Elise gave back the little book and vainly tried to eat.

"By the way !" said Mr. Whyte to the stout gentleman, "did you know that we have a Catholic priest on board and a Jesuit too, I believe."

"No !" said the old man in an agitated tone, "may the Lord preserve us !" and he looked reproachfully at the captain, "but one cannot prevent it, they are everywhere, everywhere."

"Fine men, fine men ;" said the captain, "I often get one from their college in New Orleans, or from

the missions down the coast. This one is Father Grey from Belise, British Honduras, I know him well. He is returning to England, you will hear him preach next Sunday, and you will like him, I think."

The ladies looked pleased and interested, but the old gentleman said :

"God forbid !" most fervently, and turning toward the Whytes, said in a confidential tone across the table :

"If I had known there was a Jesuit on board, I would not have come even though my tickets were taken, and this the last passenger boat. Do you know that I discovered at our boarding house in New Orleans, that the very boy who brought the milk was a Jesuit, and I warned the lady of the house, but she would not listen to me."

"Oh ! no ;" she said, "you must be mistaken. I have known his mother many years, and she is a most respectable woman."

"And by that same," said the old gentleman in an agitated tone, "I knew she was a Jesuit too."

"A woman Jesuit ! said Mr. Whyte astonished, "are there such things as female Jesuits?"

"Plenty of them," said the old gentleman earnestly, "plenty of them, and they are everywhere. As to the captain," sinking his voice to a whisper, and winking mysteriously, "I felt it from the first, I shall watch him, we don't know what his plans are."

Here the steamer gave a sudden lurch, which sent the dishes sliding, and caused another laugh, but as the pitching motion kept up, after this the laugh subsided, and many grew suddenly sober. The old gentleman got very white, excused himself, and left the table.

Elise who had eaten nothing, but was trying to taste her soup, became so pale as to alarm Lucille, who, after a few whispered words to Mrs. Whyte turned the child's chair, removed her napkin, and led her across the cabin, tenderly. When outside she gave her a little shake, saying:

"Go up now, and stay with the nuns, and don't come near me with your sickness, unless you want as good as you got this morning, and more of it."

Then she turned and left her with a look of intense aversion. The child was at the foot of the cabin stairs, she caught the railing of the stair-case, and clung to it.

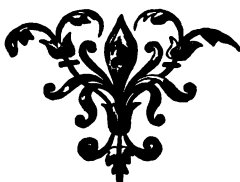
"What a dreadful thing is sea-sickness," said one of the young ladies. "Poor uncle! he will have to watch the captain from his berth the rest of the voyage; he firmly believes that all the world are Jesuits, and that they have but one object in life, which is our conversion. Will you see how the passengers drop out? You will see me following them soon. Last time we went up, I was afraid I was going to die, and then I rapidly became afraid that I wasn't, and offered my sister all my

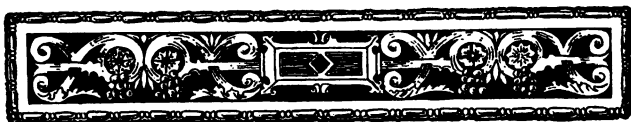
worldly goods and chattels if she would throw me overboard."

Truly of all ills which are not generally considered dangerous, sea-sickness is the worst and the one for which you receive the least sympathy. As one has said :

"You walk along the cabin, having nothing stationary to compare yourself with, are not conscious of much motion, when suddenly you find yourself apparently weighing six hundred pounds, and your feet so heavy, that you can hardly lift them from the floor. This is bad enough, but the next moment is much worse, when you find yourself light as a feather, your gait very uncertain, quite unable to put your foot where you want to, and oh ! oh ! such a dreadful, intolerable, 'goneness' on each side of your stomach, just above your hips ; the lines from each side of your nose to your mouth grow sharp and pronounced, a blue color begins to shade your face, here and there. If you lie down, that dreadful feeling—which, perhaps, 'goneness' very inadequately expresses — comes back, whenever the vessel sinks. If you are wise, you go on deck, where the fresh, salt air seems to harden you, better to sit there, even in a drenching rain, rather than go down to the misery, and smells below. Most people, however, go to their berths, and there, night and day, make that dreadful sound, half way between a cough and a roar.

Words won't express the feelings, however, and I don't know that I ever saw a more truly miserable, pitiable, woe-begone creature, than a sea-sick man, or woman."





CHAPTER X.

THE JESUIT.

OUR little girl continued clinging to the balusters, quite unable to see or walk. She was talking to herself a little :

“How queer I feel, if some one would only help me a little to go to the Sisters. Perhaps I am going to die now, like Jacques, and Gertrude, but I must not die until I get to New York for papa would be so sorry.”

Suddenly she found herself lifted in the strong arms of the captain.

“What is the matter little one? I fear the sea is treating you very shabbily,” said he.

“Will you take me to the Sisters, please?” she said faintly, and her head dropped on his shoulder.

“The two nuns!” said the captain, rather alarmed, “I wonder where I shall find them?”

“I think I can find them, captain,” said a voice behind him,—“and I can relieve you of your burden if you will permit me?”

It was the much-dreaded Jesuit, who had been watching Lucille and Elise, and now came forward to offer his services.

"Eh! Father?" said the captain; "is the little one one of your flock, then?"

"I think she must be," said Father Grey, "are you not, my child?"

"Yes; Father," said Elise confidently, and then closing her eyes again, as the deadly faintness overcame her.

Greatly touched, Father Grey took her from the captain, and carried her up the stairs, and soon came upon the two nuns seated in a quiet spot with work and reading.

Father Grey was an Englishman, very tall and thin, with a decided stoop in his shoulders, caused by long study; with dark blue, penetrating eyes, very deeply set, which seemed to read your soul. As he came up to the nuns bearing the child in his arms, they arose, and Sister Felicitas with her sweet, low voice, full of concern, said:

"Why, Father you have brought back our little girl to us, is she ill?"

"It is well there was some one to bring her back," said he, rather sternly, supposing her under the care of the Sisters. "I found her carried by the captain, where she had fainted at the foot of the stairs."

A kind lady passenger offered a steamer chair and rugs, which Sister Felicitas, quickly and deftly

arranged for the child, who gratefully sank back in them, looking so white that the nuns were alarmed.

"Do not mind," said Elise, smiling up at Sister Felicitas, "I shall be better now."

"How did she happen to be left so alone?" said the Father.

Her story was quickly told to the sympathetic priest, who amazed, and deeply interested could hardly credit it.

"Who is the Jacques of whom she speaks?" said he.

"I am sure I don't know," said the Sister; "I do not think she knows anyone on board but the Whytes, and ourselves. She may have been a little wandering." And she looked anxiously at her little charge who was gazing dreamily at the clouds, paying no attention to anyone around her.

"Well," said Father, "look after her now, and leave her no longer to the tender mercies of the wicked."

Sister Felicitas sat down by Elise and began bathing her head with cologne, proffered by the same charitable hand that gave the chair—God bless them, they are always there—and soon had the satisfaction of seeing her fall into a deep sleep.

Not long after, Lucille appeared and stood looking at the sleeping child with a singular expression of aversion and fear.

"My lady sent me to look after the child," said she.

"I am sure you must have much to do," said Sister Felicitas. "Do you think Mrs. Whyte would leave the child in our care for the voyage."

"You are most kind, my Sister," said Lucille eagerly, "and my lady will be greatly obliged; she is down in her berth now; and is safe to stay there till we reach New York; between her and Miss Gertrude I am nearly run off my feet, let alone a strange child like that, who has the most fearful temper of any child I ever saw, and would not think twice of pushing one overboard when she gets in a rage."

Sister Felicitas glanced at the maid, with a look that caused her to cast down her eyes and turn scarlet.

"You may tell your lady," she said, "that if she will entrust the child to our care, she need have no further anxiety for her through the voyage."

"Thanks, my Sister," said Lucille more humbly, "I will put some of Miss Gertrude's clothes for her in her stateroom, number fourteen, next yours."

She then courtesied, and walked off, muttering to herself:

"Lucky thing for you Lucille; the less you have to do with that youngster the better for you in this world, or the next. How the nun looked at me to be sure. I suppose the child told her everything. The baby looked so white, asleep in that chair, she might as well have been in her coffin. I'm afraid

that old strap left its marks behind it. Good enough for her—I wonder if I shall get whacked for beating children down below?”

The prospect was not a pleasant one to contemplate, and, to distract her mind, Lucille sought out a friend she had made of the stewardess, and together they consoled themselves in a corner over a little glass of “Eau de vie” and a gossip over the troubles of this life in general and their own in particular.





CHAPTER XI.

THE SAILOR.

WHEN Elise awoke the sun was far down in the West. The water of the gulf was of a deep indigo blue, and was chopped into small waves by a brisk land breeze, with occasional white caps. Land was in sight on the left, a rocky coast, deeply indented with bays and inlets. The rocks looked very dark, but over all a light haze was forming, which softened and glorified the atmosphere, as the rays of the setting sun shone across the water, turning all things red. In the far distance were rising hills with an occasional group of stately palms, while soft white clouds, now tinged with crimson, floated in the distant horizon. In spite of the breezes there was a soft enervating feeling in the air, of the calm night, which gave one a great disinclination to move, as the boat swiftly sped its way northward.

The nuns had finished their Office, and were talking earnestly together in low tones, when they were

startled by Elise touching Sister Felicitas on the shoulder, and saying eagerly :

"We must go down, there is a soul on the lower deck who needs your help."

"My dear child," said the Sister, "what do you mean? You have been asleep, and dreaming."

The child stood by the sister's side, and now took her hand, with a pleading, earnest look in her dark eyes, and intense face. She had grown very thin, and pale within the past few weeks. One could only see the soul striving to escape from the body, which looked too transparent, and ethereal to hold it long. She pulled at the Sister's hand, and drew her forward saying :

"Oh, come ! there is but little time."

The Sister, now thoroughly alarmed for her little charge, thought best to humor her and allow her to lead them down, intending to take her to the state-room if she was as ill as she feared. Elise, still clinging to the nun, went down stairs to the lower deck, and then aft, till they came to a little cabin built on the deck. Elise went directly up to this, and tried to open the door, but the captain who was standing near and watching her with much surprise and curiosity, now interfered, and said :

"Passengers are not allowed in there, little lady."

"Oh yes ;" said the child raising her dark, pleading eyes to his face, "the sick man needs Sister, please do let us go in."

"Have you been in there before?" said the captain amazed.

"No, no; I saw him in there when I was coming up the stairs," said the child, now all in a quiver of impatience. "He wants to see the Sister, and there is but little time."

The captain looked inquiringly at the nuns. Sister Felicitas said very quietly:

"I do not know what she means, but I fear she is very ill. I think I had better take her to her state-room."

"Oh! no, Sister dear, indeed I am not ill, the man in there wants you truly and really, just open the door, please captain, and you will see."

"Well" said the captain slowly. "there certainly is a sick sailor in there. I don't know whether he is a Catholic, or not, but if you ladies will honor him with a visit, you are most welcome to do so. I will just look in first, and see if all is in order."

He stepped inside the door, and soon came out, leaving the door open behind him, and bowing the nuns permission to enter.

On a low cot lay a tall, very attenuated man, with a red bandanna handkerchief around his head. He had a snow-white beard which nearly covered his face. His dark eyes glittered from under the folds of the handkerchief, as he saw the nuns standing in the door.

"Well; what is it? What do you want in here?" he asked in sharp, querulous tones.

Sister Felicitas made no answer, but stepped into the cabin, and seated herself by the side of his cot on a little camp stool.

"G'way from here, I don't want to see the likes of you, I won't be pestered about religion. Go, go; I tell yer!"

The nun laid her hand on his arm, and said something to him in a low tone. Her companions saw him turn toward her with a look of wonder, and gaze at her intently, and satisfied with that, they turned away.

We would have liked long ago to have described Sister Felicitas, but could find no words. Her great charm and influence over others lay in that which is unseen and indescribable, a grace which caused her Sisters to say that her presence could be felt, when she entered a room, without seeing her. Her eyes, not often seen, were grey-blue Irish eyes, and could express all she wished to say, without speaking; not observing eyes, though little escaped their notice, but loving, sympathetic eyes, which drew every heart to come to her with its burden of sorrow. As Faber has said of our Blessed Lady:

"They were everywhere, but in her own miseries. They were for everyone except herself. There seemed no effort about it. It was her way. It came natural to her because she behaved with grace, as if it really was a nature to her. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, without the least trouble

to herself, and beautifies the earth without any exertion, so Mary reflects God, and gives light and shine without effort, almost unconsciously, as if it were simply her business to be luminous and beautiful, and no wonder in it at all."

So also with our Sister. She lived a mortified life of love and entire self-forgetfulness. "A true Religious, and consequently a perfect lady," said one of her who knew her well. Outwardly she was tall, very thin, graceful in her movements, which were quick but extremely quiet. One on whose frail shoulders all laid their burden and went away with new courage, and strength in their hearts, for the battle of life. Sister Louise, her companion, as soon as she saw that the sailor was not likely to harm Sister Felicitas, turned to Elise, and said:

"Come now, you and I will help her with our beads."

Up and down the deck they paced in front of the cabin. The nun hiding her rosary under her big sleeves and saying the prayers in a whisper so as not to attract attention, begging aid from her of whom "Never was it known that anyone appealed in vain."

Then sitting down on a bench outside the door, they waited for Sister Felicitas to appear. The door of the cabin was partly open, and they could see that the sailor held the crucifix in hand, but his face was hidden from them by the Sister's veil.

After a time however, Sister Felicitas turned and appeared at the door. Tears were on her cheeks, but her face was radiant with solemn joy.

"Go, dear, and call Father Grey," she said to Elise, "he is ready for his confession."

Elise needed no second bidding, she went off like an arrow to find the Jesuit Father.

The two nuns sat down on the bench again, and Sister Felicitas turned to Sister Louise saying :

"Oh, my Sister, the joy of leading a soul from darkness and misery to light and peace, what joy can equal it in this world? And that it should be given to such as we."

"Is he then repentant?" said Sister Louise.

"Oh, yes, truly and deeply repentant, and only anxious to make reparation for the past."

"Will he then live to do so?" inquired Sister Louise.

"No, the finger of death is already imprinted on his countenance, he has but a short time, not many hours, I should say. We must pray for him that his faith fail not. Poor man, he has had great trouble and sorrow."

"How strange;" said Sister Louise, "that Elise should know anything about him. She seemed too faint to see anything when the Father brought her up the stairs."

"She has a quick eye, and loving heart for all in trouble, I think," said Sister Felicitas. "Here

she comes to tell us herself," as Elise came along the deck leading Father Grey by the hand. She took him to the door of the cabin, and he went in closing the door behind him.

"So you found the Father?" said Sister Felicitas, as Elise came up to them.

Elise sat down by her side, and before answering, laid her head on her shoulder, possessing herself of the Sister's hand, which she held tightly between her own.

"Oh yes, my Sister, he was talking to some of the passengers, but he was not vexed with me for interrupting him, only so surprised and he came right along."

"The captain says that 'he can always tell a Jesuit from the other priests, and his chief reason is, that he speaks to every soul on board the ship, before the voyage is over,'" laughed Sister Louise.

Elise now looked so pale and exhausted that Sister Felicitas begged her companion to get some beef tea for her from the stewardess. After she had gone, the Sister turned to the child and said:

"When did you see the sick man, dear?"

Elise looked a little confused and said: "I hardly know, my Sister, I think I must have seen him when Father Grey brought me up stairs, and then—then, I supposed I dreamed; for I thought he was sinking in the water, and when I tried to go to him, I could not stir, and on looking up, I saw a most

lovely angel at my side who pointed to you; then the next thing I remember, I was teasing you to come down stairs to him.

"Was it my Angel Guardian, do you think, Sister?"

"I think it might be," said the Sister quietly.

"Then I have seen him, I always wanted to see him. Oh! I wish he would come again, and stay longer, so I could really see just how he looks."

"He is always with you, you know, my child, and when your spiritual eyes are opened, you will no doubt see him and rejoice with him over one more soul saved through his warning," said Sister Felicitas, who gladly welcomed the stewardess bringing a cup of hot beef tea. She was accompanied by Sister Louise, who held the cup, and persuaded the child to drink it.

The deck on which the cabin was built was appropriated to the steerage, and the younger of the steerage passengers began to assemble there to enjoy the lovely moonlight. They were getting rather noisy now; and their mirth was of a questionable character, when they were astonished by the appearance of the nuns amongst them.

Sister Louise had a little talk with them, and finding that many of them were Catholics, asked Sister Felicitas to tell them about the sailor who was dying so near.

She did so in such a simple, pathetic manner that

all were touched, many were in tears, and she finished by asking them to join in singing the Litany of Loretto for him.

The lassies were quite ready, but the lads were shy and beginning to steal off, while the Sister was teaching them a simple air; but when they began to sing, the clear soprano of the young voices, to which Sister Louise struck in thirds, sounded so sweetly that all were fain to stay and listen, and finally to join, until a strong, yet low and sweet chorus seemed to fill the air, and attract many listeners.

The ship glided along as smoothly as if in a river, through the soft bloom of the summer moonlight, and gave one the sensation of gliding off into space.

Before they had finished Father Grey joined them with a clear, sweet tenor.

When the Litany was over, in obedience to a motion of the Father's hand, all knelt, and the Father said :

"Your prayers are requested for the repose of a soul which has just departed," and then began the Rosary for the Dead.

As they rose from their knees, Sister Felicitas said to him :

"I did not think it would be so soon."

"Yes," said the Father, "and in peace."

"Deo Gratias," said the nun fervently, and they separated for the night.



CHAPTER XII.

MISSIONS.

A SUNDAY morning at sea. A quietness in the atmosphere, unknown on ordinary days. A peace in the depths of the blue sky, over which light white clouds floated calmly. A lovely summer morning to read and dream on the deck, and yet nearly all were assembled in the main saloon, who were not obliged, by duty, to be elsewhere, and the few who chose the smoking room and cards by preference. The loveliness of the sky and ocean round, might well have drawn the hearts of all to learn something of the Creator of it all, but alas! "Having eyes, they saw not," and to many, it was to be their last day on earth.

The Jesuit Father was seated on a low platform at the end of the dining saloon, placed in front of a sideboard. The children of the passengers were sitting at his feet, some at the edge of the platform, and others on hassocks. Round the door and on either side of the platform were the officers, a few sailors, and the stewards; while the revolving chairs

and stationary seats round the cabin were filled by the passengers. Father Grey had already won the hearts of many, all were eager to hear what he had to say, and so perfect order and silence prevailed. Even the children listened attentively.

The Father spoke sitting, in an easy conversational tone without any effort. The throb of the engine and lapping of the waves against the sides of the ship keeping up a kind of monotone to his words. The port holes were open on both sides of the ship, and the soft summer breeze blew gently through. It was a time and scene which were indelibly engraved on the hearts of some present to the end of their lives.

"The Captain tells me, my friends," said Father Grey, "that you are kind enough to wish to hear something of our missions down the coast of Central America, and of the natives there. I have been living among them for the past few years, and I shall be glad to tell you about them, if by that means, I may perhaps gain friends for them among the kind and generous hearts of those whom God has given a happier lot.

"We will suppose you have taken a steamer at New Orleans for the purpose of visiting our Caribs. You have had a lovely journey down the Carribean Sea by moonlight, such as it was last evening, moonlight that Northerners never dream of. A soft insinuating breeze has made the deck just the

place for a laze, but this is interrupted finally by the boat pulling up, and whistling emphatically. You see some lights on the shore. There is some waiting which the captain fills up with remarks of an uncomplimentary nature about somebody or other. Long after the sailors have seen it, you discover a black boat, with two black men, shooting through the black water, by means of paddles, canoe fashion. You go down the steps, and are directed by:

“Please step into the middle of the boat, sir.”

“It is a dugout, and with some trepidation you make for the shore. We suppose a quiet night otherwise, as you near the shore small breakers, shipping water, much baling, alternated with paddling, but even if you upset—which you don’t—you will, after an ineffectual attempt to swim, conclude to get up and walk as many have already done. The water gets rough only when the shelving sandy shore is reached, which, though a long distance from land, is not more than three or four feet deep, at the deepest, and, thanks be to God, no sharks where there is sand.

“You will be impressed with our Caribs from the first. Their manner is, at once, that of old family servants with an addition of sweetness of disposition, confidence, and fun, combined with a most flattering respect. You find the home adapted to letting in all the fresh air possible. Rooms are separated by great Venetian shutters like the blinds of bell towers;

dreadfully discouraging to the discussions of people's characters.

"The next morning out on the veranda, the sea before you is of a mild sort, sparkling almost intolerably and with no true ocean swell; the reason is before you. On the horizon some thirty or forty miles away, are low lines of cocoanut trees. It is the quays: and beyond the line another coral reef, without any, but a few narrow breaks.

"No wonder navigation is difficult, until you get inside this barrier, and that these parts were the favorite homes of the buccaneers. We will suppose this day is our biggest festa—the christening of a dory!—You will have observed that for two or three miles, the shore is set thick and irregularly with cabins. These are thatched with long plumes of the Columbe Palm, wattled sides, raised floors of pounded clay, and all as neat as can be.

"Cocoanut trees cluster everywhere. Well, in full sight, for your benefit, is a new dory,—a boat carved from a single trunk. The proud captain has spent some half a year, a hundred miles down the sea coast cutting it out. He has had as assistants camping with him, Felix Augustine—whom he had helped before in cutting his dory—Jean Narcisso, his brother, Agnes Obiseo, his brother-in-law, Magdalena Morales, and Francisco Catalena—for some other reason—camping with him. They have been working very hard, and desire a festa. So the

boat is decked with all the flags and handkerchiefs that can be mustered. The captain receives the flag from Matilda Polycarpo, the matrita, or god-mother to the new dory, the Melinda—I take real names all through. The captain is the only man on this occasion and he takes the flag, followed by a swarm of young maidens in holiday attire. Sails are set, and off they go beyond the quays, that the new dory may smell the blue. They spend most of the days at the quays in games and general picnics. Later on crowds are at the beach to greet their return. As they approach, sails are furled and every maiden seizes her paddle, sends the boat flying to the shore singing the song “La! la! la!” sacred to this occasion; as it really gets near, the whole crowd tumbles “pell mell” into the water, by the way of putting a festal gilt edge on the whole thing. The flag is then restored to the “Matrita” and she leads the way to the magnificent feast she has been cooking the whole day.

“Late in the night you will hear a deep, dull throb: “Tub, tub, tub.” A dance is going on. A “pas de seul,” however, as it is done entirely by the men and only one at a time, the rest participate by admiration only. The dance consists of an almost miraculously complicated St. Vitus dance in legs ankles, and toes, all in one spot, terminating with a rapid pirouette. The latter is the acme of art, and the boys practising it—the only dancing I have

seen—invariably go over at that part. It is illustrative of the conservatism of the Caribs, that although they are passionately fond of music, have remarkably sweet voices, and sing accurately whatever you teach them, far quicker than Europeans, and that although they have for many generations seen the graceful Spanish dancing, yet they still cling to the immemorial traditional native ball that I have described. Whether the tradition is Indian or African, no one knows. I am forgetting, though, what the Caribs never forget, the blessing of the Padre which precedes all this.

“On the other side of the river is a man-o’-war town, and if you stand on the bridge on Saturdays, you may see a pretty sight, the whole female part of the settlement out washing. Our river empties into the sea through a sandy coast and its mouth is consequently full of spits and shallows of sand. The wash-tub used here is a small, shallow trough on four high legs. There are as many as a thousand women and girls in the bright sunlight and glitter all chattering and washing the bright red and many colored clothes; sand and sea glittering and sparkling. It is a much gayer scene than at Trouville, Biarritz, and other French places which artists are always sketching.

“Perhaps, another day you would see the landing of cattle from a vessel. This is a great trial to our poor Caribs. The process is simple. The beast is

hoisted out of the hold and dropped into the water, then some men in a dory catch the halter, and keeping the head out of the water, paddle with difficulty toward shore. The animal resigns itself completely and floats anyhow, on its side or any other way, until it is made to feel the sand under its feet, when it promptly exerts itself, and gives trouble. There is an extra amount to our Caribs, who don't mind snakes and tigers in the least, despise sharks in a way that makes me strongly suspicious that we give altogether too much respect to these animals, and really joy in a hurricane or cyclone; but are decidedly afraid of cows and horses to which they are not accustomed. They tempt them into the right way by respectfully and cautiously poking at them with long poles. I was once earnestly warned by a little Carib child not to pursue a path I was taking, because a very weak and aged horse was grazing some forty feet from it.

“Our Caribs are not ambitious; they work enough to get a living, and are generous to the Church, but have no notion of being rich. May God keep them so! Their régime is very strict, none can marry without leave. Grown up men and women must mind their parents, and take their scoldings on their knees. They elect their own alcades, and no differences or business ever comes before a white judge. They allow no interference in these matters, even from a priest. It is wonderful how they draw the

line, for in matters of religion, they are remarkably obedient and submissive.

"The life of a missionary in the tropics is that of a martyr. First he must meet the trial of extreme loneliness and complete isolation from all congenial society, and surroundings. His journeyings from mission to mission must be done under the fierce rays of a tropical sun, in leaky canoes or dugouts, exposed to great heat for hours, in calms, or adverse winds. On the coast, where most of our missions are situated, he is subject to constant attacks of malarial fever, and strange to say, pneumonia, of which many of the Caribs die. "Why, then," do you say, "not go on horse back, or on foot?" Simply because there are no roads, and a path must be cut through the thick undergrowth before one can make a step in advance through the country. One thing my friends, you can easily do, which brightens greatly the missionary's life. Where there is only a weekly mail, or even less, a periodical, or paper from the outside world, seems to the lonely missionary a connecting link with civilization, and gives a greater pleasure than one can imagine who has not been thus isolated. Take an imaginary glance at all those who are toiling, and daily sacrificing their lives, from Alaska down to the southernmost point of South America—yes in Africa, the Indies, Corea, China, the soldiers fall daily, but they close up ranks and march on. Martyrs have never been

wanting in the Church, and the present generation has seen as many as any. My children what will you do?"

The missionary paused, and there was a great stillness in the cabin. Elise had been gradually drawing nearer, and now laid her hand on his. He looked down at her, and was startled at the earnest intelligence of her gaze. At a signal from him a lady at the piano began St. Francis Xavier's hymn,

My God I love Thee not because
I hope for Heaven thereby—

All joined heartily, and to many besides Elise was that Sunday the beginning of a devoted life.





CHAPTER XIII.

A FALLEN STAR.

SISTER FELICITAS was awakened in the middle of the night, by a cold little hand laid on hers. It was Elise, whose state-room communicated with that of the nun's by an inside door.

"Sister," she said with perfect calmness, "you must get up, and dress immediately, there is danger."

"Dear child," said the nun taking her hand, "how cold you are; you have been dreaming; all is well. Go back to your berth again, and I will be in presently to see you, if you are frightened."

"I am not afraid, Sister," said the child, "but indeed! you must hasten. Please, Sister, get up quickly." She spoke in the same intense earnestness, that she had used at the sailor's cabin door.

"Really, Sister," said a voice from the upper berth, you are spoiling that child. Do send her back to her berth, and go to sleep again. We would be warned if there was anything the matter. The child is nervous, and so needs rest the more."

Sister Felicitas listened a moment; all was quiet, but the noise of the engines, while from the lookout came clearly, the "all's well," of the watch.

"There, dear; hear that," said Sister Felicitas. "Go back, and lie down again, and I will be in directly, to cover you up, and give you a warm drink."

The child went back to the state-room as directed, and then instead of lying down, began dressing as quickly as possible.

"They will not come, dear angel," she said. "Do you go to them and preserve them from all danger."

After she had finished dressing, she looked about her. "It will be cold," she said. "I may take this," and pulling the white blanket off the berth, she wrapped it around her shoulders, and passed out into the cabin. All was perfectly quiet.

The lights were dim, but enough light was left to show her the way, and she moved noiselessly along the cabin up the stairs, going aft to the deck over the steerage. Suddenly a man shot from the steerage, shouting:

"Fire! fire!"——

Instantly the alarm ran through the ship, and all was noise and confusion, as a cloud of flame and smoke burst from the hold. The fire was under too great headway now to attempt to control it, and preparations were made at once to lower the boats.

Our little girl stood alone, watching the scene of

confusion. The shrieking and weeping of the women and children, the shouting of orders, and the consequent quarrelling and fighting, which always ensues where each one strives to be first. All seemed to be going on forward, and she was gradually left standing there alone. She could not have gone forward now, she was separated from the rest by a cloud of dense smoke. She was very calm and quiet, and was apparently talking to some one near, who was invisible.

Presently two men came climbing up the back stair-case from the cabin, the same way that she had come. They did not see the child, but went to the stern of the ship, and looked over.

"Here she is, all right, Jerry," said one of them, with an oath, pointing to a small boat which was floating astern, attached to the steamer by a rope.

He was a short stout man with a scrubby red beard, which, as well as his hair was cut short; the true type of a New York rough. His companion, Jerry, was a most remarkable looking man, one who would attract attention anywhere, and then give you a shiver of aversion. Very tall, and thin, with long, bushy, curly, uncombed hair and beard, of a dark brown color. A terrible gloom seemed to surround and overshadow him. His forehead was deeply furrowed by passion, while his dark glittering eyes seemed to pierce you through with a glance. The hopeless despair of the "worm which dieth not,"

seemed to have taken possession of him, as with drooping head and shoulders, he stood at the deck railings, grasping in his hand, like the traitor Judas, a bag of gold.

Suddenly Elise stepped forward: "I am to go with you," she said.

The effect was electrical. With a deep groan Jerry dropped his money bag and cowered back into the corner as far as he could go. The short man dropped on his knees and blessed himself most devoutly, his teeth chattering in his head with terror.

"Do not be frightened," said the child gently, "I am only Elise, and I must go with you to get away from the fire."

The short man was the first to recover himself.

"Jerry, man!" he said with a short, sensual laugh, like himself, "It's only one of the passenger's youngsters. Blessed ef I didn't think it was a spook. Where's your folks, little gal? Run and find em. You can't go with us."

"I cannot go!" said the child briefly.

She spoke truly, for the heat was fast becoming unbearable, and the fire was rapidly spreading, and had completely shut off the other end of the boat.

Jerry drew up the boat, dropped the bag into it, and followed sullenly cowering down again in the farther end, and hiding his head on his folded arms.

"Ef you ain't the meanest, most miserable scamp," said the short man impatiently. "Here rouse up man, and tell me mighty quick what to do with this youngster."

No response, or movement.

"Well," said the short man, "it can't be helped he's in one of his moods. Here goes for good luck," and taking the child's two hands in one of his, he lifted her slight form, and slung her into the boat. Then detaching the rope, rowed away as quickly as possible. He was none too soon, for hardly had he rowed a few yards when the burning ship gave a sudden lurch, and went down. The moon shone calmly down on the troubled water as though nothing had occurred, leaving a long glittering path of white shining over the face of the ocean, as if it might be the way by which the departing souls were going home.

"Let us go back," said the child, now weeping and trembling, "we may save some, the Sisters, Father Grey, and the others."

"No, little gal," said the short man, with another of his short laughs, "we might get more passengers than we want. Every man for himself, so say I. Here, Jerry, man, rouse up, I say, and take a hand at the oars."

Jerry thus adjured, grasped the oars, and began with desperate strength to row the boat.

"You are going the wrong way," said the child

quietly, "that is the way," and she pointed in an almost opposite direction.

"Well, I'll be blessed," said the short man, "ef she hasn't the cheek of a cast iron monkey."

"Go as she directs," said Jerry shortly. So saying he turned the boat, and began rowing away in the direction she pointed out.

"That is not yours," said the child, gravely, pointing to the bag. "You are Catholics, and should confess your sins, and make restitution. You are more than a Catholic," said she, with her inexorable finger pointed at Jerry. "You are a priest."

Jerry dropped his oars, and covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud.

"See here, little gal," said the short man, "you are altogether too sassy for a kid ; little gals should be seen, and not heard ; you just wrop that 'ere blanket around them little shoulders of yourn, and lie down and go to sleep, and when you wake up, we'll be ashore."

Perfectly submissive, and obedient, the child sat down on the bottom of the boat, and placing her head on one of the seats, was soon lost in the tranquil sleep of the innocent.

Silently the two men rowed on, Jerry with such desperate energy, that the short man had hard work to keep up with him. Presently he stopped rowing, and said :

"Jerry, man, what's got into you? you row as if

the very old boy was after you ; there's no such tearing hurry, we can't be far from shore, and we don't want to land till we see where we are."

No response came from Jerry. With eyes staring wildly before him, as though piercing through the gloom to the invisible, he rowed on as desperately as before, with all his strength, and with apparent unconsciousness of all around.

"All right, then, have it your own way," muttered the short man, "but I'm not going to kill myself for you, not ef I knows myself, and I thinks I does. Lets count the swag, and see if it pays," So saying he shipped his oars, and proceeded to open the bag of gold and count its contents.

Elise stirred uneasily in her sleep.

"Papa, papa," she said, and her lip curled over with the same grieved look which we see sometimes in babies when troubled. The short man looked at her in alarm, but she slept on unconsciously.

"I've a great mind to pitch her into the water, and be done with it," he said vindictively.

He made a movement toward her, perhaps with that intent, but was arrested by Jerry who said in a voice which made the short man jump nervously.

"Let the child alone !"

"I hain't touched her," said the short man peevishly, and he began to put back the gold in feverish haste. The grey light of the morning was breaking when he had finished, and caused him to shiver with

the chill which accompanies that early hour. Taking a flask from his pocket he took a long pull and then offered it to Jerry, but he might as well have offered it to a statue. Jerry saw nothing around him, and with a dissatisfied grunt the short man replaced it in his pocket, and again took the oars to assist his companion. Very soon they came in sight of a low, sandy shore.

So the kid was right after all; she knows too much altogether, to suit me," said the short man, "and now where might we be I wonder? As I have to answer my own questions with this crew, I should say we should be up pretty nigh to Old Virginny. I wonder if the Rebs would grab us if we land; rather them than old Ben Butler, who is around about here somewheres. Well there's nothing for it, but to make a try," and very soon the boat grounded the sandy beach.

No sooner did the boat come near the land, than Jerry dropped his oars, gave a frantic leap ashore, and began to run up the beach.

"Hello here!" shouted the short man; "come back here man; where are you going?"

"To do penance for my sins!" shouted Jerry clasping his hands over his head, and running with all his might.

"Fool! he's gone mad through that simple idiot of a baby! 'It's an ill wind that blows nobody good.' So much the more for me. Jerry always

was a queer one," he soliloquized. "I'm glad enough to get rid of him, now let's see where we are."

He looked around; behind him was a steep embankment of sand which ran along the beach as far as he could see. To the North was a cape, on which stood a light house. Here all was profoundly quiet, and solitary.

"Couldn't have arranged it better, ef Providence was on my side!" chuckled he: "Might be somewhere near Norfolk, reckon I'd better make a little survey." He stealthily crept up the high sand bank, toward a clump of bushes growing at the top.

When he reached the top, he stood up and looked through them. There was no occasion for his stealth. There was a pine grove on the embankment, and below this, on the plain, a regiment of Confederates had camped. It was early yet, but all were astir, getting breakfasts over camp fires, and the sentinels were posted rather nearer than he liked, so he stole quickly back down to his boat.

"This is not the place for you, my man," he said to himself. "I reckon I better keep on a little, but first I must get rid of the kid. I've had enough of her and Jerry, a little too much. Here, young'un, wake up I say, we got ashore."

Elise opened her eyes and looked round her for a minute, and then stood up.

"All is well with them," she said, looking gravely at the man.

"Do tell," said he, "delighted to hear it I'm sure. Now you just step out of this, and lively too. Give me that 'ere blanket, you've no further use for it, and I may find it handy, then walk yourself right up that ere path, and you'll find someone there who will give you some breakfast, and send you to your friends."

The child handed him the blanket, and stepped out of the boat.

"I suppose," she said, "you cannot return it to the steamer?"

"Oh yes, I can," said he. "Of course I'm going to row right back there and drop it in the water, just where she sunk."

"You are not a good man," said Elise, "I don't like you."

"Don't say?" said the man in a tone of concern. "That's not fair, when I rowed you ashore. If I wasn't in such a confounded hurry as well as desiring to be as quiet as possible, I'd give you good reason for not liking me before I leave you."

He gave the child a look which made her shudder and turn away, and as she walked quietly up the bank, he sprang into the boat, and rowed quickly up the shore.

Before going on with the history of our little heroine, let us see what has become of Jerry. His character was a striking instance of the truth of the adage: "Those who standeth highest falleth lowest."

A boy in the Jesuits' schools, he stood highest in his class for intellectual gifts, and attainments, and when he begged admittance to the Society, he was sincere in his intention to devote his life to the "Greater Glory of God," but full of pride, and self-reliance in his natural gifts, he must be humbled first to the dust, before he could become a tool, "meet for the Master's use." His superiors, recognizing his natural abilities, sent him to Rome to finish his studies. Here he devoted himself with so much energy to his work, that he fell ill of brain fever, and closed that avenue to himself forever. When convalescent he was sent to a country house to gain health and strength. While there he was one day walking with a party of lads who were recreating at the same house. In their walk, they came to a very rapid stream, flowing through the meadows. One of the lads full of life and vigor, gave a running leap, cleared the brook, and lighted on the other side, amidst the applause of his companions.

"Oh! that is not so difficult," said the Father, "This bank is much higher than the other; the difficulty would be in jumping back again."

"The boy laughed, ran back a little way and tried another running leap, to regain his party; but he had miscalculated his strength, he missed his footing, and fell back again into the water, striking his head against a stone. His comrades quickly formed a chain, and the foremost rushed into the

stream, and soon rescued him. He had not been five minutes under the water, but all their efforts to resuscitate him proved in vain, his life was completely extinct, and he who had been the life and light of the happy party on setting out, was now borne home on an improvised shutter, his companions chanting the "De Profundis" as they walked. This terrible event proved too much of a strain on the poor Father. His reason again gave way, and it became necessary to send him to an insane asylum. Here he slowly recovered, and again he joined his community, but alas! his pride and self-reliance were still unsubdued, and in rebellion toward the hand that chastened, his faith became weakened. He fell a victim to the first strong temptation and left the "Society." What need to tell any farther; he fell lower and lower, until he reached the lowest strata of humanity. Of what use were his natural gifts to him now? Only a torment, which made him abhor himself and prevented his becoming one with his comrades. He had not indeed joined the plot of firing the steamer, and robbing the passengers, but he had not prevented it, and he had seized the gold, which he hoped would give him the opportunity of again rising in the world."

Oh, the pity of it! who can fall lower than a reprobate religious? How often do we not hear of those who once shone as stars in the firmament, who now lie grovelling on the ground? Their punishment

has already begun in "the fire that is not quenched and the worm that dieth not." Hating with all their strength the Holy Mother Church that they once so much loved, full of doubts and contradictions, melancholy and self-repining they have lost self-respect and the respect of others, without which life is not worth living. There is no such unhappy or degraded being in the world as a fallen religious.

Salt is good; but if the salt shall lose its savor wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither profitable to the land nor for the dunghill, but shall be cast out and trodden under the foot of man.

Father Grey had partly penetrated Jerry's disguise on the steamer, and by some few pointed words had let in the first ray of hope since he began his downward career. Then the appearance of Elise, whose words had been so evidently supernatural, had finished the blessed lesson. He knew it to be hopeless to attempt to gain readmittance to the Society. Nevertheless he turned to it for direction and guidance in his great need. To-day there is no more fervent penitent among the Trappists than Jerry.

"How did the child gain her knowledge?" you ask. I cannot tell. Is it the angels or heaven-born instinct which enables children, nay, sometimes even the dumb beasts, to discern truths which we who believe ourselves wiser, cannot see? I must leave the question to wiser heads, or more spiritual souls to answer.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE CONFEDERATES.

A PINE grove on a mid-summer day! what recollections does it not bring forth? Recall to one's mind the air full of the odor of the pines, the soft melancholy sighing of the wind in the branches overhead. This one was a small upland grove, which overlooked a plain on which, as we before said, was encamped a regiment of Confederate soldiers. The sky was cloudless, the sun had risen two hours ago, and was beginning to pour down its fierce rays on the tents below. Every one was astir down there; but up here in the grove all was silent except the wind in the pines, which seemed playing the solemn dirges for those, who, in a few days, would be stretched cold in death on the field of battle. Under the tall trees, and near the edge of the bank, two young men were stretched on the carpet of pine needles; conversing in low, earnest tones. One has the grey uniform of a Confederate officer, and the other was in civilian's dress. The latter, whom we shall call Alex, was speaking:

"So you are going to join Beauregard's army, Harry?"

"Yes;" replied Captain Harry Webber, the only son of one of the F. F. V's. "We are momentarily expecting marching orders."

"What does your mother say to it all?" said Alex.

"Oh! mother's metal rings out the genuine article," said the young officer sadly. "She buckled on my sword herself, and told me to go with her blessing, with a smile under which I knew well her heart was breaking. May God preserve me to reward her generosity. I surely will, if man can do it," he added, fervently.

There was a moment's silence, and then an oriole from a bush near, poured out its very soul in an ecstasy of song.

"A good omen!" said the captain. "I accept it as a token of success."

"But what under heaven is it all for?" said Alex impatiently.

"For the defence of our rights, of course," said the captain.

"Rights!" said the other with scorn, and incredulity in his tone.

"Do you suppose," said Captain Webber hotly, "that we are going to let those beastly, skinflint Yankees trample on our rights, take away our property, and submit tamely, without lifting a hand to protect our homes?"

"Here is one, at any rate, who has no wish to do so," said Alex, with a sad smile.

"Forgive me, old fellow, I quite forgot you were a Northerner, but all events you are no Yankee."

"Straight from Varmount," said Alex, with a nasal twang.

"Oh! when shall we learn to know each other, and when will it all end?" he added with a dismal sigh.

"Where will it end?" said the young captain cheerfully. "Oh! it will not be any such tremendous matter, I think," he added after a moment's reflection. "When Northerners see we are determined to stand up resolutely for our own rights, and will resist all tyranny even unto death, they will give way; and we shall peacefully secede, and have our own nation and government. This country is getting too large to manage itself well, and the South and North can no more mix than oil and water. No; depend upon it, the Yankees are too fond of their money bags and business to stop to fight, and there will be very little of it done."

"Ahem!" said Alex significantly.

"There I am again!" said the captain. "But you know very well that present company is always excepted, and we are friends; we will not let this wretched affair separate us, will we, old fellow?" and he looked beseechingly into Alex's eyes.

Alex grasped his hand right cordially, and the-

young captain was beginning again, but broke off suddenly with:

"Hello! who have we here?"

Elise stood before them, looking down on them with an earnest gaze. Her hair was somewhat tumbled, and disarranged by her adventures: but the little lady shone out under all her untidiness, and the escaped hair curling in rings around her forehead and neck only made her look more pretty, and picturesque. How frail and almost ethereal she looked as she stood there, after her sudden and unexpected appearance. The color in her lips and cheeks was unnaturally bright, and her dark eyes full of tears at the loneliness of her position. She was a picture of exquisite loveliness; and so thought the startled young men, as she gazed down on them.

"If you please," she said, "I am Elise de la Roche, I came last night from the burning steamer, and I am going North to New York, to my father."

"Burning steamer!" exclaimed Captain Harry. "Are you sure you are not a fairy? Did you hear of any?" said he, turning to his companion.

"No;" said Alex. "But don't you remember the light on the horizon, last evening; we noticed it from your mother's veranda?"

"To be sure, to be sure," said the captain who did not look deeply concerned over the news. "So that was a Northern steamer? Where are your

friends, my child, was there no one to look after you?"

"They must have gone in the boats. I think it was well with them," said Elise hesitatingly.

"Was no one with you? How did you get ashore?"

"Two men brought me, and then went away again," said the child hanging her head. She was too full to say any more, and the tears began to roll down her cheeks.

"Oh come now!" exclaimed the captain. "I can't stand that, you know," and he sprang to his feet.

"See here, little sister, I will take care of you, and see you safely with your friends, if you will trust yourself with me, and do just what I tell you; that is if I live," he added in an undertone. "Is that a bargain?" he said, holding out his hand to her with a winning smile.

The child, in answer, slipped her hand in his, with confidence, and lifted her dark eyes trustfully, with a smile, and the friendship was sealed.

"Now," said the captain in a satisfied tone, turning to his friend, with a comical smile, "the question is what shall I do with her."

"Send her to your mother, until an opportunity comes to pass her through the lines. I'll look after her," said Alex.

Elise clung the tighter to her new friend's hand and looked at him beseechingly, saying:

"I want to stay with you."

"And you shall," said Captain Harry. "No one knows when the opportunity to send her North will come, better than the present one. We are bound straight through to Washington, at least, and she shall go along with me."

"You must be crazy, Harry!" said Alex; "Take a child like that along with the army! What will you do with her when you go into action? What are you thinking of?"

The captain laughed a little self-consciously, and said:

"Well, I suppose I am a little looney. But mother could not resist sending along Uncle Pete to look after her chickens, and he's brought his big covered market wagon and favorite mules. He has filled it pretty well with supplies, but he will have room for the little one, and take care of her like a mother, and you may trust him for keeping out of the fighting and coming off with a whole skin."

Alex shook his head dubiously.

"Will you go with me, little lady?" said the captain, "or go and stay with a kind lady, till your papa can come or send for you?"

Elise's answer was a look and confiding motion, which touched the young captain inexpressibly. He turned his head suddenly, and pretended to shade his eyes from the sun with his hand, while he hallooed lustily for Uncle Pete.

Soon an old darkey came laboring slowly up the hill; he was black as night, tall, and bent with age. On his head and face were patches of white wool, which reminded one forcibly of a decaying trunk in a dark forest, with grey moss growing on it.

"Here, Uncle Pete!" called the captain, "I've got a passenger for you."

"Got a what fer me?" quavered the old man in a high key.

"A passenger," said the captain. "Can you find room for this little lady in your wagon, and look after her as the apple of your eye?"

"Dat lile gal!" said Uncle Pete lifting his hands, and rolling his eyes in amazement. "Laws, you're only foolin', Massa Harry. Zedekiah and Ezechiel bof tole me dis mawnin' dat dey couldn't tote annodder ounce no way and no how, and dat jes' because I wanted to put on a lile bacon, let alone a child like dat un."

"Well, Pete," said the captain with a resigned air, pressing the little hand reassuringly, "we shall have to leave her here in the woods, then, I suppose there's no one else I can trust to look after her, or at any rate, no one else who could do it as well as you."

This was a parting shot which told with great effect, and Elise completed it by fainting away, to the dismay of the three men.

"Bress de Lord! Massa Harry, de pore chile's

dying wid de hunger, wat you tinkin' 'bout; boys don't know nottin' 'bout carin' fer chilluns, anyhow." He caught her up in his arms, and hurried down the hill, followed by the young men who were looking at them anxiously.

When Elise became conscious again, she found herself lying on a luxurious couch of evergreen boughs, covered with the captain's best blue rug. Uncle Pete was alternately sprinkling her face with water, and slapping her hands with a most worried look on his kind old face, while the young men bent apprehensively over her.

Dat's right," said the old man as she opened her eyes. "She'll be all right now, massa, I'll be boun'. Pore lile chile, she only wanted her breffus, so she did, and Uncle Pete will gib some to yer, so he will, honey. Don'y move now an you'll see how chipper you'll be in a minit."

Elise smiled at him gratefully, and won the old man's heart. A delicious sense of repose stole over her, and she felt she could lie there forever. She closed her eyes while the old man proceeded to boil some coffee in a tin cup on the coals of his camp-fire and to impale some transparent slices of bacon on sharp sticks which he placed over the coals, and let it drip slowly down on some corn bread as it cooked.

"Oh, Uncle Pete! the child can't eat *that*," said Alex, scornfully.

"Jes' you wait a minit," Massa Alex; "an' you'll see," said Uncle Pete condescendingly.

"Well," said the captain, "what would you advise Uncle Pete? If Zedekiah and Ezechiel, won't draw her, what shall we do?"

"Let us bress de Lord ! Massa," said Uncle Pete. "You don't understan' dem critters, and nebber did. Dey's mighty perticler who dey makes frens wid, but wen you see em look ober hyar like dat, and stamps dere feet, and flaps dere ears, dat means dey know more'n most folks, and proves ob dis un for a fren. I don belieb you could make dem mules stir one step now, widout dat lile chile. Mighty curus now ! ain't it?"

"Well, I'm glad they've got so much sense, uncle, and I shall look to you to keep her right under your eye, until I take her away."

"Wile hosses shan't draw her fum dis old darkey, massa," said the old man, and he proceeded to dish his breakfast, which he carried to the child as respectfully as if she were a princess.

Elise opened her eyes, and smiled gratefully at the old fellow; then she sat up, and tried to eat to please him and found it much better than she thought.

"The appetite comes with the eating," as the French say, and she began to feel much revived.

"You see, Massa Alex, you see," said Uncle Pete to the young men who were watching her, much pleased with the result.

"I shall have to give up, uncle, that you know best," said Alex, and much relieved the two young men strolled off, leaving Uncle Pete greatly elated with his success.

"Dat's right, honey, dat's right; I knows all yees want was sumpin' to eat. Dem yere mules ober dere is ours; and dey's been askin' introduction to yer for de las' hour. Dere names is Ezechiel and Zedekiah, and dey's powerful anxious to make frens wid yer."

"My name is Elise," said the child politely.

"Dat's fust class name, and dem critters knows the quality jes' as quick. Dey's very particular who dere friens is, and dey likes you, and says dey will draw you right up to your pa right smart, now I tell yer."

"Oh! will they?" said Elise, "dear Uncle Pete you are so good."

"Sartain," said Uncle Pete; "Massa Harry, he's de cappen, and has to ride wid his men you know, but his ma sen' me to look atter him and I'll look atter yer both. It'll be nottin' but a big camp meetin', and will hab a jolly good time."

Elise spent the rest of the day on her evergreen couch, dreamily watching the camp fire, and talking to Uncle Pete. She was sheltered from the rest of the camp, on one side by the big market wagon, and on the other by a group of Osage orange trees. Mrs. Webber, the captain's mother, and others of his

friends came to see her from time to time through the day, and tried in vain to persuade her to stay with them in Norfolk; but she begged so earnestly to go on with the captain, that they were obliged to give way, especially as it was the general feeling that there would be little blood shed, and that the Southerners would meet with no opposition, but carry all victoriously before them. Elise was greatly amused in watching the camp life, and listened gravely to all the discussions which were carried on, as to where and when they were likely to meet the enemy. When night came on, Uncle Pete made her a snug little nest in his wagon where she slept well in spite of the discomfort of unchanged clothes. Early the next morning she was awakened by the sound of the bugle calling all for the march. She scrambled out of the wagon, and joined Captain Harry in a hasty breakfast of coffee and hard tack. Soon she was on the front seat with Uncle Pete, enjoying greatly seeing the different companies march out.

“See dem mules, now,” said Uncle Pete, “dey knows just as well as de wisest. See em now wid dere heads togedder plannin’, and plannin’; look, an you’ll see em salute wen Massa Harry’s company goes out.”

Surely enough when the company of proud young Virginians stepped, with heads up and martial air, with their resolute young leader at their head, Uncle Pete by a dexterous twitch on his reins man-

aged a general squeal, and stamping of feet with his mules.

"See dat now, don' tell me," said the darkey impressively.

Elise was profoundly impressed, and believed, most admiringly, in Uncle Pete and his mules.

"The music makes me feel so strangely in here," she said pressing her hand on her heart.

"Oh! dats nottin' 'tall wen you gits used to it, I feel jes' so myself wen I eats too much," said Uncle Pete.

All through the hot day the rode, through dusty roads with the hot sun pouring down on them. Elise sat by the old man's side, and told him of her Southern home, of Mademoiselle, and Jacques, and the dear ones waiting for her in New York. He was deeply interested and frequently interrupted her by his exclamations of astonishment and admiration. He, on his part, told her how he had always lived with the Webbers, and cared for Massa Harry, "sence he was a pickaninny and allus would."

"Dem no 'count niggahs run away, and joins dem Yankees, but de quality stick to de ole stock, no Linkums fer me, I says."

At noon they halted an hour, where a brawling brook ran into the river. Elise begged hard to find a quiet place to make her toilet, but the old man would not listen to her leaving the cart, and he would not leave the mules, so she must fain content herself with the little water he could bring her.

At night the tents were again pitched and then followed another long, hot, dusty day. Elise greatly pitied the men who looked weary and fagged out. Orders for a halt were called early the next evening. There were no tents struck, the men laid on the ground with their blankets around them, and there seemed to be an atmosphere of dread expectancy of a sudden call to arms.

Elise noticed that the old man drove his wagon aside from the rest, when they halted on a plain on the banks of the Shenandoah. He stopped, where a branch road led off from the main road up into the mountain region, and seemed possessed with some mysterious secret, which caused many an ominous shake of the head. It was a quiet spot which he had chosen, and as usual he managed to screen off his camp by his wagon from all observers. The camp fire was built and the kettle boiling before Captain Harry appeared. He was rather paler than usual, with a resolute, firm compression of his lips.

"Hulloa, little queen! how goes it?" he exclaimed gaily, as he threw himself on the ground by the fire.

Elise quickly and deftly made him a cup of tea, and while they were laughing and chatting over it, she noticed that the old man was very busy arranging the inside of his wagon.

When Harry had finished, Uncle Pete appeared and said mysteriously :

"Better you sleep in de team to-night, Massa Harry. I've fixed a nice place in de front for de lile un: de mens hab been drinkin' an' she may need you 'fore de mawnin'."

The captain hesitated.

"Perhaps you are right," he said finally. "I will see what I can do."

Later on, Elise woke to hear the old darkey persuading the captain to take a hot drink before lying down, promising solemnly to watch, himself, and call him at the least disturbance. Then all was lost in unconsciousness.





CHAPTER XV.

MAUM ROSA.

SOME time in the night, Elise awoke to the consciousness that the wagon was moving, and then went off again to sleep. When she next awoke, the faint light of the early day was shining through the front curtains of the wagon. She felt sick and faint, from the motion of the wagon, and the confined air of the little space in which she had been sleeping during the night. She scrambled to her feet, steadying herself by the back of the seat, and looked out through the curtains of thick canvas which hung at the back of the driver's seat. She was at first only conscious of the delicious feeling of the fresh morning air, as it blew in her face, and then she looked around her with great astonishment.

There was no one in sight. No army; no Uncle Pete; only the two mules plodding leisurely up a steep hill. One hill seemed to succeed another in the view before her, while on the right, down, very far down, she saw a deep valley, with an irregular

line of mist rising over a river, and far beyond that a blue line, which might be the bay, a black serpent-like line in the valley which she thought might be the regiment on the march. Why then were they up here? and where was Captain Harry?

She was greatly relieved to hear the familiar droning of a Methodist hymn, with which her intercourse with Uncle Pete had already accustomed her. The singer she now discovered was walking at the head of the mules, holding the reins. He seemed in high spirits and occasionally stopped to double up with suppressed laughter. Then checking himself, he began :

“Oh! Canaan! bright Canaan! I’s bound fer de lan’
ob Canaan.”

Again suppressing himself, with a scared glance backward, as if in fear of waking someone, and then with an irrepressible chuckle, he began once more :

“Ef you git thar before I do. I’s boun’ fer de lan’
ob Canaan
Look out fer me, I’s comin’ too. I’s boun’ fer de
lan’ ob Canaan.”

Greatly puzzled at this condition of things, Elise called out :

“Uncle Pete! Uncle Pete! where are we, and where’s the army?”

"Hush! hush, honey!" said the old man in alarm.
"You'll wake up the captain."

"The captain!" said the child. "Is he here too?"

She lifted the curtain behind her nest, and discovered a long form wrapped in a soldier's blanket, stretched over Uncle Pete's stores.

"May I come down to you, Uncle Pete?" she called in suppressed tones.

The old man came to the side of the wagon, and lifted her down, with one hand while he held the reins with the other.

"Yer see, chile," said he, "dere is gwine to be de biggest kin' of fightin'; so all de men tole me, an' dat ere boy ob ourn, Massa Harry's bound to be in de wuss ob it all, and will git hurt sure as can be. So, I tole de mistiss I'd look atter him berry careful, I tort and tort, an' at las' I jes' put lile sumpin' in he punch las' night to make him sleep fine, an' den I tote 'im right off wen dey's all asleep. Bress de Lord! de scentry man knowed me an' he didn't see nottin', nottin' 'tall."

Here the old man roared, and stamped, and laughed until the mules stopped.

"Dem critters" said Uncle Pete "hab so much sense, dey knowd jes' as well as myself, and dey went out ob de camp on tippy toes, jes' as careful, an' dey hasn't made a soun' dis mawnin'."

"But, Uncle Pete, will the captain like it?" said Elise doubtfully.

"Laws, chile ! I 'spect he'll be putty mad ; but dere I has to do it ; yer see, he hurt hissself sure enough ef I didn't, an' his ma would be much displeased."

"What will he do?" said Elise timidly.

"Let us bress de Lord, honey ! he cawn't do nottin' ; nottin' 'tall, I'se got 'im sewed right up in his blanket : he ! he ! he ! I'se 'won't take 'im out till de fight's ober wid and den he goes back to his company, yer see, he ! he ! he !"

Elise ran lightly on in front of the team up the hill, stopping here and there to bend over flowers, softly touching them sometimes, but never picking them, singing a low song to herself, and then talking a little, apparently to the flowers, birds, or insects, which the old darkey noticed seemed to keep about her. He watched her for a time with some awe, and it seemed to him that he could see a kind of radiance around her.

"Dat chile is one ob de blessed ones, sure 'nuf," he said, but his attention was withdrawn from her by a stir, a groan, and then an exclamation of astonishment from his wagon, followed by :

"Hello, Uncle Pete ! Hello you ! What in the name of goodness ! Hello there, I say."

Uncle Pete walked on serenely, innocently oblivious, but rather scared, chuckling to himself a little.

The captain wriggled himself to a sitting position, and put his head through the canvas at the sides.

"What under Heaven and earth does all this mean?" roared the poor captain. "Where are we? You miserable old idiot, come here and let me out."

"Laws, Massa Harry!" said the old man. "Yer knows de mistiss don't prove ob fights, and I done promis' her to look atter yer an' keep yer out ob de fights, and de boys hyar, dey tole me dat dere gwine to be de biggest kin' ob fight dat eber was; so you jes' lay down easy, and by-'m-by I'll loose yer."

"You good for nothing, confounded old darkey! don't you know that you've disgraced us forever? That I shall be shot for deserting, and none of us can ever hold our heads up again? You have disgraced us all irretrievably. My God! what a situation! I believe I shall go crazy. Come here I say, and cut these strings. I'll have you sold. I'll never speak to you again while I live. I'll shoot you down the minute I'm free. Obey this instant."

"Lordy, please forgib dat 'ere boy's bad words; he knows better, fer his ma nebber 'low him to talk dat way; but please 'scuse him, Lordy, he'll be sorry by-'m-by, wen he gits ober bein' mad," said Uncle Pete, and, as the captain began to get frantic in his struggle to free himself, he mounted the seat to keep an eye on him.

Captain Webber finding himself so securely sewed in the blanket that it was impossible to get free, was silent and quiet now for a time, trying to grasp

the situation, and considering how he could meet it, for even if his story were believed by his superior officers, what a laughing stock to the whole regiment he would be, to be carried off like a baby by his old nurse; death seemed to him then his only resource. What a terrible misfortune had befallen him!

The mules began ascending another long hill, and Uncle Pete, weary from his long watch, began to nod. The captain was aroused from his stupor of despair, by a cool little hand on his brow, and a whisper in his ear:

"What can I do for you, Captain Harry?"

The child had climbed up the hanging step behind the wagon, and was now pityingly regarding the fallen hero.

"Oh, Elise! You blessed little angel, I knew the Lord sent you to me. Be quick now, there's a dear child. There to the right is my belt; draw out now very carefully the long knife; there now put it in my right hand under the blanket, be careful, dear, you'll cut yourself; now run ahead of the team, again, or Uncle Pete will be looking for you."

Obedient to the letter, the child was soon up the long hill in front of the mules, engaged in saying her beads begging our Blessed Mother to intercede and preserve from all harm him whom she had just loosed from his bonds.

Uncle Pete was rudely roused from his nap, by a sound box on his ear, with :

"Take that, you infernal old idiot, for meddling with the affairs of your superiors. It's time you found out who they are," and the young captain unfastened his horse from behind the wagon, and clattered down the hill, as if the enemy were after him.

"Who did dat?" shouted the old man. "Whar's dat boy?"

And looking behind, he found that his prisoner had escaped.

On seeing this, the old man completely broke down.

"Oh Lordy! Lordy!" he moaned, "he's shore be killed—he's shore be killed! I did my bes', mistis, 'deed I did," and the tears rolled down his wrinkled old face.

In an instant Elise was by his side, her little arms around his neck, and her soft kisses on his rough old cheek.

"He will be safe, Uncle Pete, I know it sure. I know he will not be hurt, and Madame Webber would be very angry if we had taken him away from his company," she added very impressively.

Uncle Pete found himself greatly comforted, and looked at the child.

"Are you shore?" said he, anxiously.

"Sure!" said she positively.

"I believes ye, missy," said the old man meekly. "I tinks de angels tells yer."

"They do, Uncle Pete; they do. You will bring the captain back safely to his mother, and I shall be with papa, and all will be so happy," and she clapped her hands and laughed gleefully.

"God grant it, child!" he said solemnly. "Anyhow we got 'bout to de top ob de hill, and we'll turn in hyar and gib dem pore critters a rest and den we'se goes down udder side an' kitches de army."

They now turned off into a wild wood road; the forest closed them in on both sides. Elise resumed her place by the old man's side and they drove on in silence. It was all so beautiful. The road was overgrown with grass on which the flickering lights and shadows seemed to play and dance. The tinkling of the mules' bells, the song of the wild birds and the music of a little brook over the stones were the only sounds to be heard. The brook ran along side the road in a little ravine and crossed the road once or twice. It was spanned at these places by round wooden logs joined closely together. On they drove through the forest aisles, arched by the trees, and finally the road ended in a large open space, before a grand old stone mansion.

It seemed quite empty, and deserted. They waited and listened a little time for the occupants. Uncle Pete hallooed once or twice, but the only response was a bit of bark thrown angrily down

on them, from an overarching elm in front of the mansion; and looking up they saw a pair of large grey squirrels, who were scolding and chattering noisily at the intruders.

"Dey's nobuddy hyar, dat's a fac," said Uncle Pete finally. "Spec's dey's done gone Norf," he said with a sigh. "We'll just stay hyar tru de heat ob de day and den we'll trabb'l atter dat bad boy."

He got down from the wagon, and lifted down the child, first attending to the wants of Zedekiah and Ezekiel as he always did, while Elise went off to explore the mansion. He was proceeding to build a fire and look for fresh water, when a dull boom sounded faintly on his ear. The old man startled convulsively and then fell on his knees, wringing and clasping his hands alternately.

"Oh Lordy! Oh Lordy! he's dere. I know'd it I know'd it," he said, rocking himself to and fro. "Oh! Lordy, Oh! Lordy."

Again Elise was at his side.

"Let us go, uncle," she said. "Let us go and find him."

"No, lile missy, not jes' now, we must wait a wile, an' den we go down and fine him."

Mechanically, he went on with his work. They heard no more of the distant cannon. Elise went into the house and found, to her delight, a kitchen built at the back in which there was a cistern of running water. It was not locked, so she went in

and made the best toilet that she could, under the circumstances, and came out again, fresh as a rose, to her old friend. He persuaded her to eat and drink, and did so himself, and in spite of their fear, and anxiety they both felt new strength and courage, so dependent are we on these vile bodies of ours. Then all was packed up once more, and Elise tried to persuade the old man to take a quiet rest, and smoke, but she could not coax him to his accustomed siesta. He looked around uneasily, uncertain what to do.

The house before them had been a grand mansion in its day. It was built of grey stone. The two wings and the centre formed three sides of a quadrangle. In the centre was a deep arched recess which formed the principal entrance to the building. The steps leading down from this entrance were of stone. They were now broken, and falling apart. On these, Uncle Pete and Elise were seated. The arch was covered with climbing roses, in full bloom; from the roses darted a humming bird with gorgeous colors which fluttered around and around Elise's face as though striving to find an entrance to extract the honey.

She clasped her hands in ecstasy.

"Oh it is so beautiful!" she said. "And the dear angels do it all."

"Do all what, chile?" said Uncle Pete.

"Why everything, the coloring, the flowers, the birds and sky. All the frost, rain, snow and wind."

"Land sakes! I nebber heerd tell ob dat afore," said Uncle Pete. "I tink, honey, you's made a mistake, it is de Lawd dat do all dat."

"Yes, uncle, but you know the angels are His servants, and the saints belong to His household, and they minister to us for Him."

"Dat's so chile, dat's so, but I nebber tought ob de way afore."

"Did you know the people who used to live here, uncle?" said the child, after a little silence.

"Why no, chile, I don't know presently w'ere we are, but I 'spose I know'd 'em ef I heerd dere names. I know all de folk in dis part ob de kentry, but dey hasn't libbed hyar, fer many a day, I tinks."

"There are spirits here who need our prayers," said the child faintly. "I felt them in the house, and I feel them now. Let us go inside, and we will say the Rosaries of our Blessed Lady and for the Dead for them, the poor souls."

As she spoke, she went up to a large bay window in one of the wings and looked in. It was a large drawing room taking up the greater part of the wing. The entire room was heavily panelled in oak. Opposite the window through which she was looking, was an immense stone fire place. Over this the panelling was even more elaborately carved, and in front of the fire place was a large hearth stone. The room was completely dismantled, there was not an article of furniture to be seen, and there was a mel

ancholy, dismal look within, that made the old man shudder, and turn away, saying:

"Oh, no, chile! I wouldn't go in dere fer all de worl'."

"Well then," said the child, "we will pray for them right here, under the trees. But the spirits will not hurt you, Uncle Pete."

"One nebber kin tell, chile," said the old man. "I can't say no pra'rs. Dere ole Moses he kin preach and pray by de yard, but dis ole darkey he don' know no pra'rs 'tall."

Again the sound, boom! boom!! boom!!! came faintly to their ears on the breeze.

"Oh pray, chile! pray anyhow, anyway, fer de young massa," said he, turning pale under his black skin. "Oh! Lordy, hab mercy; and spare him, spare his poor, dear mudder."

"There is another mother who will feel for and pray for her, if we ask her. Come Uncle Pete!"

It was a strange sight to see the fair, straight young form, and the bent one of the old man pacing up and down the walk in front of the old mansion. Elise saying her beads and instructing the old man in his responses.

The shadows were beginning to get long, when they had finished, and the old man announced that it was time to go. With a sorrowful heart, filled with dread and terror of what might lie before them, he harnessed the mules into his wagon.

They drove back through the forest, to the high road again and began to descend on the other side of the mountain. When they came to the brow of the hill they both exclaimed at the prospect which lay stretched suddenly before them. In the distance was a range of dim blue hills, and behind these the sun was setting. A glorious, yet gloomy, and angry sunset.

The whole western sky was flooded with a bright orange flame, except a bank of threatening clouds which hung lowering in the west, a few feet above the horizon. The sun had sunk a little below these and glared like a bright red ball of fire, while bars like iron, formed by the clouds, stretched across its face. Far down in the valley was again that dark serpent-like line, and the glint of the setting sun on the bayonets, showed them to be soldiers marching to their fate.

Then the sun disappeared and darkness descended on the poor valley, so soon to be desolated by the cruel fate of war. Wearied out by the events of the day, the little one fell asleep, with her head on Uncle Pete's shoulder, and even the jolting of the wagon down the rough hills or its stopping some hours later, failed to rouse her. It was very late when Uncle Pete finally reined up before a low brick house, by the side of the road, at the foot of the mountain. It was a pretty little one-story cottage of brick with the addition of a kitchen in the rear, built

of wood and painted the color of the bricks. Everything was covered with vines and the perfect order of the place made it most attractive. Uncle Pete shouted in vain for some time, but at length a window opened and a man's voice enquired: "What is wanted?"

"Let us bress de Lord! Ned, you foolish boy," was Uncle Pete's response. "Don't yer know Uncle Pete?"

The window slammed down, and a young man soon appeared at the door, and then came to the wagon side.

"Well, well," he said. "How could I know it was you, uncle. I thought 'twas a crowd of those rascally soldiers; they nearly cleared us out last week. If we hadn't been ready for them and driven the stock to the mountains, and hid the rest of our goods, we shouldn't have had a thing left. But you're welcome! you're welcome, we are wanting your good, common-sense advice. Get down and come in, while I put up your team."

"Can't stop, boy, dis time," explained the old man. "I wants yer to take care ob dis yere lile gal fer me wiles I go fer de young massa."

Great was Ned Brown's astonishment when Elise was placed in his outstretched arms. Begging Uncle Pete to wait one minute, he carried the sleeping child into the house without waking her.

Maum Rosa and her son Ned were the sole oc-

cupants of the little cottage. Maum Rosa had been nurse, first, and later, maid to a wealthy planter's family for the last twenty-five years. Now, all her charges having grown beyond her care, she was honorably retired. Her son was still coachman on the plantation, but his mother had secured for him a fairly good education, while she herself had insensibly imbibed the good language and gentle manners of those around her. She came out now to the wagon with her son, and listened with both surprise and amusement to Uncle Pete's story. They both joined in begging him to remain with them, representing that the state of the country was such that he was sure to lose his beloved mules, and goods, if he went on alone that night, while he could easily find the regiment next day by the aid of daylight.

"Lie down and sleep," said Maum Rosa pityingly. "I will call you at four, and you can get away before the child wakes, and I will take good care of her until you bring back Captain Webber."

This arrangement was finally carried out, and the first ray of the morning sun saw the old man hopefully depart. His strength and courage greatly revived by the sympathy of his friends, and his night's rest.

When Elise woke the next morning she sat up on the lounge where she had been placed the night before, and looked about her in great bewilderment. The main part of the house was taken up by the liv-

ing room where she had been placed. It was a pleasant room; the good taste, neatness, and perfect order might have done credit to a far more pretentious house than Maum Rosa's. The lounge on which Elise was laid was covered with a light buff linen, the seams of the cover corded with dark crimson; behind it falling from ceiling to floor was a large fisherman's net and balls, which formed a quaint yet effective background in grey, and was connected, with the past history of the house, with Maum Rosa's most sacred memories. A large bay window was open on the other side, which looked out on the distant hills covered with blue haze, while a yellow laburnum filled in one side of the window with its long fragrant sprays. The outer door stood open and led directly into the front yard. The floor was covered with a white straw matting which was protected by a bright plaid linen crumb cloth. In the centre of this was a round table spread for breakfast; this was also covered with a crimson cloth, protected with white linen doilies from the breakfast dishes. In a corner, by the bay window, was Ned's desk and books, while a case over this contained his rifle and fishing tackle, plainly showing that the room was used as a true living room, where nothing was excluded which could add to the comfort and happiness of its inmates.

Maum Rosa came in directly after Elise awoke, and seeing that the child was awake, said cheerfully:

"Well, little daughter, you have had a good sleep; do you know where you are?"

"Where is Uncle Pete?" said the child in reply.

When she had heard Maum Rosa's explanation, she was very unwilling to remain; but she was a reasonable child and saw the necessity of waiting. After her breakfast she went out to explore the premises, and after her usual fashion made friends with all the living creatures on the grounds. After Maum Rosa had finished her housework, she sat down a moment, in her little sewing chair, and became lost in painful thought over the coming struggle. Her boy's sympathies, she knew, were all with the Northerners. He had been longing for his freedom ever since he was old enough to know he was a slave. She knew he would enlist as soon as the opportunity offered, and he was the last one left of her once large family.

Suddenly, Elise stood beside her in silence. Maum Rosa looked up to see what the child wanted, and was startled to see that Elise was evidently making a strong effort to compose herself, and was looking at her with large, dilated eyes.

"What is it, dear? What can old mammy do for you?" she said.

Elise, in answer, threw herself into the old woman's arms and burst into tears, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Oh, mammy," she said, as soon as she could

speak, "there's a poor little chicken out there, and he is *so* sick, and nobody cares one bit."

"Bless the dear little heart!" said Maum Rosa. "Show me where it is, and we will bring it in and give it the best of care."

Elise led the way to a farm yard behind the house, and there, truly, they found, as she had said, a little chicken on its back, gasping and kicking its legs convulsively in the air. Elise looked indignantly at the old mother hen, who was heartlessly scratching for the rest of her brood at a little distance, quite content without the missing one.

Ned came to the barn door to see what they wanted, and as Maum Rosa gathered the little chicken betwene her two hands, in order to warm it, he said:

"No use, mother, that's a 'goner!' the old hen left it out last night, and it got chilled. It's too far gone for even you to bring back to life."

"You went right by it, and didn't care," said Elise indignantly, the fire flashing from her eyes.

The young man laughed and said teasingly:

"Let it stay with its mother then. Chickens that run away from their mothers deserve to come to grief."

"I did not run away from mine," said Elise gravely. Then she turned and went into the house, followed by Maum Rosa. Here they got an old pasteboard box which they lined with cotton-wool, and placed

the chicken in it under the kitchen stove. After a little, it began to peck at some chicken dough, in which Maum Rosa had sprinkled a little cayenne pepper, and in a few hours, Elise had the supreme satisfaction of seeing it join the family brood as well as ever.

As the day drew near to its close, Elise became very restless and uneasy, indeed all were in sympathy with her; it was something in the atmosphere. Nothing had been heard from Uncle Pete, though the child had been constantly on the watch for him. She gathered from listening to Maum Rosa's and Ned's conversation, that there had been fighting not far distant, but no one knew the result, or extent of the battle.

"Uncle Pete should have taken me with him, he promised the captain he would; he should not have left me here in this country," she said, with her eyes full of tears.

"Well, dear, he will soon be back, please God," said Maum Rosa, gently. "And we must try to patiently wait God's will."

Then losing herself in dark forebodings of her boy's future, the poor old woman rocked to and fro with anguish.

"This one, too, dear Lord," she moaned. "Oh! spare me this one."

"Would you like me to tell you a story about some brave soldiers?" said the child, diffidently, lean-

ing against the old woman's shoulder, putting her arm lovingly around her neck, and peering anxiously into her face.

"Do, dearest," said Maum Rosa. "I am a selfish old woman, thinking only of myself."

"Well," said the child, seating herself on a hassock at her feet, "once upon a time, in a country, I can't remember where, but very, very long ago, there was a brave company of Catholic soldiers, only forty of them."

"And the rest of the regiment was Protestant, I suppose," said Maum Rosa.

"No, pagan," said the child, "people who worshipped idols, there were no Protestants in those days, they hadn't come then; everyone was either Catholic—some good, and some bad—or else they were pagans.

"Well, these forty were very good and brave men; the best the emperor had—and he was very proud of them; but you know the emperor was a pagan, and Satan had put it into his head to hate the Christians, so one day he told all the army that they must worship his false god, but the brave forty refused to do so. They marched away from the others and said that they couldn't obey the emperor in this, for it would be a sin. The emperor was fearfully angry," said Elise earnestly, "and he had them whipped dreadfully, with whips, and iron things."

"Elise paused, and her face flushed.

"Were you ever whipped?" she said.

"Bless you, no, child! I always had a kind master and mistress."

"I was, once," said the child simply. "It was dreadful."

Mammy smiled, but said nothing.

"Well, these poor soldiers were whipped until the flesh was torn from their bodies, but God strengthened them, and they did not give way. It was in the middle of winter, and fearfully cold, so that everything was frozen solid. As cold as the North Pole, I suppose. Were you ever at the North Pole, mammy?"

"Never! I was never outside of Virginia," said mammy.

"I never was there, either, but I believe it was near New York, where I am going, and if you just step out doors in winter, you are frozen to death."

The old woman was horrified. "The Lord preserve us," she said, "what will become of you?"

"We shan't stay there long," said the child reassuringly, "we are going back to Regalia as soon as the war is over, and those bad men go away. Well, as I was telling you, when the emperor saw they would not give way, he said:

"You just take them down to the pond that is frozen up solid, take off their stockings and shoes, and all their clothes, and leave them there in the

cold, no matter how much their fingers ache, or their toes ache, until they will obey me.' Well, the pagans took the forty brave soldiers down as they were told, and took off their clothes, then they built great, roaring fires around the pond, and said :

“ ‘Now, whenever you will obey the emperor and worship his gods, just hold up your hand, and you may come to the fire, and get warm.’ But you know, the soldiers wanted to die a martyr’s death, above all things, so they held up their heads, and marched proudly and joyfully down to the pond. They knew they would soon go straight to Heaven, and they all prayed hard to God—except one, and he was so proud, and thought himself so brave and strong that there was no fear of his giving way—not to let them give way.

“There was one of the pagan soldiers helping to build the fire, who happened to look up in the air, and there he saw forty of the most beautiful angels, standing near the men. Thirty-nine had beautiful crowns in their hands, and their faces were shining with joy, but one hung down his head, and wept, for he had no crown. While the pagan was looking at them, and wondering at the sight, one of the Christian soldiers gave up, and held up his hand, saying: ‘I will obey the emperor, only take me to the fire.’ Then the pagan soldier sprang quickly into his place, with joy, saying: ‘I am a Christian, and will take his place.’

"So they took off the pagan's clothes, and put them on the poor Christian, who had given way, and carried him to the fire, but no sooner did he get there, than he died." Elise sighed deeply. "He did not pray to God, you see, and he could not bear the dreadful cold. Well, the others died by degrees, and when the morning came, there was only one left who was still breathing. The soldiers wanted to save him, but his mother said: 'No, do not keep my dear child from his martyr's crown, but put him on the cart with the others.' And so they did, and then threw all the bodies into the fire, and they were all burned."

Elise's face was radiant with triumph.

"That was a bad mother," said Maum Rosa, solemnly.

"Oh no, mammy," said the child. "She was a brave, true mother; she cared more for Heaven than earth. Wouldn't you?" and the child fixed her eyes earnestly on the old woman's. "The dead you know are living."

"Goodness, child!" said Maum Rosa, "you make me shiver. Now, dear, I am going to make you a little bed here on the lounge, and you shall sleep, while I wash and mend your clothes, so you will be all ready to go with Uncle Pete when he comes for you."

The child's answer was a hearty hug and kiss, as she said:

"You are so good to me, dear mammy."

Ned came in, soon after, and with a teasing laugh, he said :

"Miss Elise won't speak to me because I didn't look after the chicken."

"Oh ! yes, I will," said the child, "and Oh ! Ned, if Uncle Pete don't come soon, won't you take me to the army, and help to find Captain Harry?"

"Take a little girl like you to the army ! You must have the cheek of a brass monkey."

Elise wonderingly put up her hand, and pinched her cheek to make sure it was still soft, but when she turned to Ned for further information, he was talking earnestly to his mother, in low tones, and before he had finished, the child was fast asleep.





CHAPTER XVI.

MISS JONES.

It was very early the next morning when Elise awoke from her sleep ; she sat up, and looked about her. Her clothing, neatly washed and ironed, lay on the chair near.

"Dear mammy," she whispered, "how good she is to me ; but I must not stay here any longer. I must go to papa, and if I wait any longer she will stop me. Dear angel show me the way, and keep me from all evil."

She arose, and dressed herself quietly, and then stepped out of the open window, lest opening the door should wake some one. It was past three in the morning, and a dim light was beginning to show itself in the eastern horizon.

"Good-bye, dear mammy," said she, kissing her hand toward the house, "and thank you for all your kindness ; but I must go to papa."

She went down the path, and took the high road to Washington, without any doubt or hesitation as to the way, and walked swiftly away. The road lay

along the river, and was bordered by plantations. It was only shaded at intervals and left her to the mercy of the dust and rays of the sun. But she walked steadily for two hours without stopping or faltering. It was with a thankful sigh that she came to a group of trees, beside the road, under which was a large stone watering trough for horses, and sat down by it, completely exhausted. Owing to the early hour, she had met no one thus far, and had not dared to enter a house for fear of being detained. It was a lovely spot where she was resting. The watering trough was composed of a large boulder, the top of which was hollowed out in the shape of a basin, while the water fell into it with a musical sound from a pipe leading out of the bank above, the whole being overshadowed by two or three large pines. She went up to the rock, and bathed her face and hands, and then tried to catch some in her mouth as it fell. She was not very successful in this, but found these few drops deliciously cool, and, with a thanksgiving, sat down under the trees.

"Now, if you please," she said, "I would like something to eat."

There was no one there; at least no one visible to human eyes, but hardly had the words escaped her lips, when her attention was arrested by shouts, and presently two little negro boys came racing down the road, one driving the other who carried a water pail. They might have been eight or ten years of age.

The elder one was the driver, and the younger represented a restive horse, and was tossing his head, champing the bit, and giving his driver great trouble. They stopped short when they saw Elise, and looked anxiously at her, but did not speak.

"I wish," said Elise, wistfully, to them, "you would bring me some breakfast."

"Haven't you had any?" said Peter, the older boy. "Where do you live?"

"Oh! very, very far from here," said the child. "I have been walking a long time, and I am so tired and hungry."

"Well," said Peter, "come up to the house, and mammy will give you some breakfast."

"No;" said Elise, "no one must know I am here, or they would not let me go and find papa. Can you keep it a secret for a little while?"

"I can," said Peter, promptly, "and Jone had better, or he knows what he'll get if he tells," threateningly glancing at his brother.

"I won't neither," said Jone, thus dared. "Mammy says secrets are sin, and I tell her everything, and I'll tell this one, too," with a look of defiance at Peter.

"Oh!" said Elise coaxingly, "I don't think this is one that she would not like you to keep; you can tell her when I have gone away, but you would not like to keep me from my papa, would you?"

"No," said Jone slowly, "I like you."

"So do I," said Peter. "Now you keep Jone here ; he's such a little fellow he'll be sure to blab. Mammy lets us bring our breakfast out, and ours is just ready. I'll go and get it."

So saying, he filled his water pail, and set off as fast as his burden would let him, and Jone, nothing loth, sat down by her side.

"Soldiers come here, sometimes," he said, digging his bare toes in the mud, "and we run away and hide. You'd better run, too, when you hear 'em comin', or they'll carry you off to 'bugaboo.'"

"What kind of soldiers?" said Elise, hoping to find some trace of Captain Harry.

"Big ones, on great big horses, that come 'calump-ing' down the road, as I did," and his eyes grew big as he watched to see the effect on Elise.

Peter soon came back with a tin pail of coffee, and a large round hoe cake.

"This is our breakfast," said he, politely, "but Jone and I can get plenty more by-and-by, and you must eat this," and he frowned severely at Jone who seemed on the point of rebelling.

"Here is plenty for all," said Elise. "If you will get me the tin cup that is hanging up there, I will take out some coffee, and you boys can have the rest."

It was soon divided as she suggested, and the three greatly enjoyed their breakfast under the pines. Elise did much better than usual, her long morning walk giving her an appetite.

When she had finished, and again bathed her face and hands in the spring, she prepared to go. The boys begged her to stay with them, offered to go with her and assist in finding her father. They were so urgent and determined that Elise sent them back with the pail, and took advantage of their absence, to start northward once more. With renewed courage and hope, the child ran down the road again, but very soon slackened her pace. The sun beat down hotly on her head, she began to feel dizzy and faint, and was obliged to rest often. She met occasional parties of soldiers, but very few civilians were abroad, and she would hide herself behind the trees, and fences, at the approach of these.

Was it at the bidding of her angel?

As it began to grow toward mid-day, the houses grew thicker, and Elise thinking she was drawing near a town, took a branch road, leaving the main road by which she had been travelling, still fearing to be detained. With languid steps the child crept on wearily, and finally stopped before a little cabin by the road side. It stood alone on the river bank; there were no other houses in sight. It was a tiny little white cottage of about three rooms, with a large cotton-wood tree at the back, which sheltered and shaded it.

The child looked at it wistfully, but would have passed on had she not been arrested by the pierc-

ing shrieks of a child, nay, more, two or three seemed joining the chorus within. She listened a minute; the cries grew louder, and there was no sound of an older voice among them. After a little longer hesitation, Elise went timidly up to the door, and rapped.

There was no response; the cries stopped for an instant, and then began louder than ever.

She then went around to the window at the side, and ventured to look in. What she saw there made her open the window quickly, and climb into the room. In the room was a boy of about five or six years of age, dressed in a little flannel night dress, another, two years younger, similarly attired, and a baby in a cradle, the three screaming with all their power, from fright and terror. The older boy had thrown himself against the front door, and was beating it with all his might. As Elise entered, the noise ceased, and the children stared at her with eyes and mouth wide open with surprise.

"What is the matter? Where is your mother?" said Elise.

"Mammy! mammy! I want my mammy!" screamed the older boy beginning to cry again, and the other two promptly took up the chorus.

Elise decided that desperate measures must be taken at once, and looked around her. Dirt and confusion reigned supreme; a bed in the corner was unmade: the children had probably tumbled out of it at an early hour.

Broken dishes, soiled clothing, rags and shoes, were scattered about; a dirty table, minus a leg, leaned against the wall under the window, with a disreputable air, and the two chairs looked equally dissipated and disabled. She picked her way across the room, and opened a door at the back, which looked directly on the quiet, glittering river.

In the yard here, was the same confusion; a three-legged bench leaned against the grand old tree, cabbage stalks, a broken coffee pot, with pools of dirty water standing here and there; but here was shade, fresh air, and the river. She went back in the house and brought out the two older boys, and gave a sigh of relief at seeing some stalks of sugar cane, lying on the old bench. She gave these to the boys and left them content, while she went back, lifted the heavy baby, and brought him out also, depositing him in his blanket on the ground.

Quiet now reigned, and Elise took advantage of it to ask the older boy :

“Where is your mother?”

“I dunno,” said the boy and his under lip began to curl down ominously.

She left him, and began to search for provisions, and was delighted to find a pail of milk on the door steps, which had been left in the early morning and had not yet soured. Gathering up some bits of wood from the ground, she managed to build a little fire, on which she heated the milk, and satisfied the little

ones, who appeared ravenous, and then drank some herself. She knew not what next to do, but went to the road, and looked up and down to see if there were any one in sight. The children clung to her skirts, crying as if they feared to lose their new protector. Elise went back and gave herself up to amuse the children. She built houses in the sand, laughed and sang to them until all were as merry as possible. About an hour afterward, in the midst of their merriment, they were startled suddenly by an exclamation :

“July ! For the land’s sake ! what young’ uns this?”

Elise looked up, and there stood a most remarkable looking girl. Very tall and thin, with the brightest of red hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes. Her hair was banged across her forehead, and her face and hands quite brown with freckles. Her twinkling, light blue eyes seemed looking everywhere at once. She was neatly dressed, but with a light pink calico, which reached half-way between her knees and ankles, while the sleeves were also outgrown, and failed to cover the long slender arms and wrists which were also covered with freckles. The two girls stood and gazed at each other in silence. Not so with the children, who recognized an old acquaintance, and clung to Elise, screaming desperately.

The new comer caught up a switch, and said :

“Now, you, John Thomas, stop that noise, and behave yourself, or you know what you’ll get.”

John Thomas only shrieked the louder, and the new comer caught him by the arm, and brought down the switch with all her force, leaving a red mark on his little bare legs. Elise screamed almost as loud as the boy, sprang at the girl and tried to get the switch away, but the girl laughed scornfully, and held the switch just out of her reach, dancing backward as if to invite her to a chase, and then laughing heartily at her vain efforts to reach it.

John Thomas, considering that "discretion is the better part of valor," shamelessly abandoned Elise, and retreated to the house, where he stood peeping out the door, to watch the course of events, while the little three-year-old stopped crying, and began to suck his fingers.

"You may just as well make up your mind, that I'm boss of this job," said the new-comer decidedly, "because I'm going to be. How came you here, anyway?"

"I heard the children crying, and I came in to take care of them," said Elise meekly.

"Well, that's my work; these are widow Jenkyns' young'uns, and she goes off to camp to sell things to the soldiers, and hires me to mind the house while she's gone. I don't mean to hurry any. What's the use? crying does 'em good, and they knows by this time that they've got to behave themselves, when I'm around, and do just what I tell 'em, or I'll know the reason why."

"Oh! but please don't whip them," pleaded Elise entreatingly. "I'll tell you what, if you'll promise not to whip them, I'll tell you a lovely story."

The other gazed at her incredulously. "I don't believe you know any," said she.

"Indeed I do," said Elise, "lots of 'em, and real true ones, too."

"All right," said the other, "I like good stories, all murders and robbers, you know,—but what's your name, and where did you come from anyhow?"

"My name is Elise, and I am going north, to my papa."

"All alone, and walking?" said the other with surprise.

"Yes," said Elise, "but not alone, my angel guardian goes with me, and shows me the way. What is your name?" she asked timidly.

"Lilybel Jones," said the other decidedly; "you're a queer one, but I like you. Now I'll tell you what. If you'll tell me a story and keep the young'uns for me, I'll cook us a first-class supper for me and you and Miss Jenkyns, when she comes home. Is't a bargain, hey?"

"I don't think there's anything to cook," said Elise doubtfully; she had begun to feel that something to eat was a thing not to be despised.

"You bet," said Miss Jones, with a knowing wink.

So the program was carried out, baby was deposited in the cradle, and now that Miss Jones had

arrived, the other two needed no persuasion to play quietly by themselves. She seated herself on the ground, and clasped her arms around her knees, with an air of expectation, while Elise, taking an old box, tolerably clean, seated herself on it, and began :

"Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, there was a little girl who lived in France, and her name was Germaine Cousin."

"What a queer name," said Lilybel. "It isn't half as nice as mine is."

"Yours is a lovely name," said Elise admiringly, "but then you know you can't choose your own name."

"Oh! yes you can," said Lilybel composedly. "I learned a piece at school, and the name of it was, 'A Good Name,' and it began :

'Children choose it
Don't refuse it,
It's a precious diadem !'

and, besides, Marm changes mine, most every time she reads a new novel."

"But you must keep the name you got in baptism," said Elise in astonishment.

"Never got none," said Miss Jones. "Never got baptized, and never mean to neither, folks who get religion, are, generally speaking, cranks."

"Never been baptized!" said Elise with horror.

"Then that's why you are so cruel and wicked to the little ones."

"You dry up," was the response, "or you'll find out whether I'm cruel or not."

Elise hastened to continue her story.

"Well, one day, while she was still a little girl, her dear mother died and went to heaven, and there she prayed for her little daughter, so the Lord sent her great troubles and crosses of every kind, that she might become a saint."

"Hope there don't anyone pray for me," said Miss Jones.

"Her father married a cruel, wicked woman, who treated her dreadfully. She used to say very cross, unkind words to her, and beat her, and make her work hard in the fields, and she wouldn't give her any clothes to wear, or anything to eat, so poor Germaine was always very cold and hungry."

"Bet your life, I'd hev give her as good as she sent, and plague the life out of her," said Miss Jones, "and to do her justice, there is no doubt, but what she would have been as good as her word."

"Germaine did not," said Elise. "She never made one word of complaint, and never answered back, but was always bright, sweet, and pleasant. When she went out in the fields to mind her flocks, she would gather the little children around her, and tell them about heaven. When she was teaching the little ones, or talking to them about heaven and

the angels and saints, her face would shine, and glow, as though from a light within her."

"Like yours, I reckon," said Lilybel.

"Oh, no, ever so much better," said Elise.

"Yours is nice enough for me, anyhow," said Miss Jones.

"Well; there came a day when Germaine went to her work in the fields, feeling very cold, and sick, and faint. And when the day was over, she did not come home, for our Lord had compassion on her, and took her to heaven. Her step-mother never went to look for her; but that night, when some men were going home from their work, they saw a light streaming from a barn, and they looked in to see what was the matter, and there on a heap of straw they saw the dead body of poor Germaine, and the light was shining from that, and from the Holy Angels who were watching it.

"An' yer calls that a true story?" said Miss Jones scornfully.

"Yes; all true," said Elise.

"An' the men seed the angels?"

"Yes," said Elise.

"Did you ever see an angel?" queried Miss Jones incredulously.

"Yes, often," said Elise, "in my dreams."

"What are they like?" said Lilybel.

"One was like a beautiful child, with his hands crossed on his breast, always looking up to heaven.

His dress was made so that you could see each thread separately, and they shone and glittered like frosted silver, and a bright light shone all around him."

"I wish I could see one; how do yer manage it?"

"I don't know," said Elise, doubtfully, "I'm afraid you have not got one, if you are not baptized."

"Would I have one, if I were baptized?" said Lilybel.

"Yes; I am sure of it," said Elise.

"Then, by jinks! I will try it, I'll git religion, and be dipped next time there's a camp meetin'."

"Germaine was not baptized that way," said Elise, "she was a Catholic."

"There ain't many of them around here," said Lilybel; "a priest comes sometimes to Mrs. O'Leary's, I believe, but he never speaks to anyone but Catholics, don't 'spose he'd have anything to say to me, ef I as't him."

"Oh, yes, he would," said Elise, "try it, and see."

"Well, I'll see Miss O'Leary, and see what she says," said Lilybel doubtfully; "she don't think much of me though, but I'll ask her sure; now give me the baby, he's off till his mother comes home, and you feed the other two, and put them to bed, while I get supper."

So saying, she took the baby into the house, and soon came out with some thick slices of bread, spread with molasses, and a tin cup of milk for the two boys.

Elise wondered where it came from; she said nothing, but proceeded to distribute it to the two children, who enjoyed it immensely.

In about half an hour, Lilybel summoned her, and the two boys, much more submissive under the eyes of Miss Jones, allowed her to put them back into the same untidy bed from which they had rolled in the morning, together with the sleeping baby. John Thomas showed a slight inclination to rebel, but at a glance, and motion from Miss Jones, he promptly shut his eyes, and went off to sleep.

Elise gazed around her with pleased surprise, everything had been made tolerably clean and orderly by the quick decisive movements of Lilybel, and on the table smoked a fried chicken, pancakes, and coffee.

"Where are you going to stay to-night?" asked Lilybel, as they sat down.

"Oh! I can't stay," said Elise, "I must keep on till I find papa."

"Good grief!" said Miss Jones, "but that's nonsense you know, you can't go on; don't you know they are fighting perfectly dreadful, and they'll think nothing of gobbling you right up, and killing you, and carrying you off. I 'spect you'd better sleep here, but with only one bed, for you, Widow Jenkyns and her three youngsters, there'll be precious little room, and what there is will be awfully crooked, I reckon. Now we'll leave these things on the table,

for Miss Jenkyns, who will be here in a little while. You go on out on the steps, and I'll be there presently. We'll watch for soldiers: it's fun I tell yer."

Elise obeyed, and went out: but when Miss Jones appeared a few minutes later, there was no one to be seen.

"July! she's run;" said that young woman after blinking her eyes down the road in vain. "Well, I told her, and if anything happens I'm not to blame. I wonder if she wasn't a spook anyhow?"





CHAPTER XVII.

A LOST SHEEP.

SWIFTLY the little figure ran down the road, until out of sight of the cottage, and of fear of Miss Jones' pursuit. It was now growing quite dark. The grey clouds were moving rapidly overhead, as if a storm were gathering; only a little strip of gold in the west showed that the sun was setting behind the clouds.

The country was very still and lonely; she met no one, and for the first time her heart sank with fear. The road seemed to grow wilder, and was evidently not much used. Now it entered the forest, and it rapidly grew darker. She looked up at the swiftly moving clouds overhead, and was comforted to see the moon peeping out behind them. Then it was suddenly obscured, and a gust of wind moaned through the trees, and tossed their branches about. As the child heard it, she folded her hands together, and prayed:

“Eternal rest grant unto them, oh Lord, and perpetual light of glory shine upon them. May they rest in peace! May they rest in peace!”

A sudden flash of lightning, immediately followed by a crash of thunder, and a large tree fell across the road behind her, but the little quivering figure kept steadily on. Now she was out of the forest. Thank God for that! and the storm seemed passing over without rain.

It was growing lighter, and as she lifted her eyes beseechingly to heaven, she saw, through a rift in the dark clouds, the moon, stars and clear, shining sky beyond. “It is like the dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament,” she murmured, “a clear shining, in a dark world. He is there, the angels are near, why should I fear?”

The road before her was separated from a pasture on one side, and a hill on the other, by a rail fence which had been thrown down in many places.

Suddenly she started! what was that dark object on the side of the road? It looked like a dead horse. Oh God! what are all those dark forms ahead, lying on the hill, the other side of the ditch? Without pausing, guided by her invisible guardian, she crosses the ditch, her foot slips; what is it makes the grass so slippery and wet? She tries to save herself from falling by putting out her hand; With what is her hand wet? It is blood! blood everywhere; on the ground, on the rocks, and fences.

She shuddered, wiped her hand, but kept steadily on toward a clump of bushes, at the foot of the hill. At last she gains them, stumbling and falling more than once over those still, cold forms, and kneels beside the body of a lad of sixteen or seventeen years of age. He is conscious and moaning in a faint, weary way. He is lying on his back, with his head lower than his body. She laid her hand gently on his; he opened his eyes, and called eagerly:

“Water, water. Oh! give me some water.”

It was for this, then, that she has come, for this that she has been separated from her friends, toiled through the long wearisome way, and borne so many disappointments, for this one soul, only a school boy, but one for whom Christ died, and who needs her help.

“Where can I get the water?” said the child, her tears falling fast, as she spoke.

“My canteen is under me, but you can pull it out,” said the lad.

Carefully and skilfully, as if she had been trained, she drew out the canteen, gave him to drink, and then tenderly bathed the poor face and head, already growing cold in death. Then she unfastened his haversack and blanket, and managed to draw his head in a more comfortable position on them. At his direction, she found a little flask of brandy in the haversack, which she gave him from time to time as the night went on.

The storm had now passed quite over and the moon shone out clearly. Elise kept her back to those dark forms that she might not see them, and her face toward the bushes and that of the poor lad.

It was July, but it was cold, very cold. The katydids kept up their noisy discussions, as if nothing had happened. There was a distant mournful sound of a whip-poor-will, a bat circled around them in a weird manner, and Elise in spite of the greater horrors of the night around her, felt afraid of it, and found herself shrinking away as it swooped near them in swift, noiseless circles.

"Oh dear!" sighed the boy, "how nice it is to have you here; where did you come from?"

"My name is Elise," she replied, "and my guardian angel led me to you."

He looked at her wonderingly.

"Are there really such things as angels?" he said.

"Did you not know it before?" said the child, in surprise.

"I have heard so," said the boy, "but I did not really believe in it."

"Will you tell me who you are? and what is your name?" asked Elise, timidly.

"Oh, I am Jim Winters! You wonder why I am here, I suppose, but a lot of us fellows in a military school enlisted for three months; we thought it would

be only good fun, and this is the end of it all," he groaned wearily. "Father tried to stop me, but I told him I'd run away if he did, and so he let me come."

A pause, his eyes closed, and he began breathing heavily. Elise gave him some more brandy; and he began again:

"I suppose I was thrown down in some way, and then a charge of cavalry ran over me. Don't feel so bad. I don't suffer much now. All the lower half of me is dead."

"Have you never been baptized?" said Elise.

"I'm sure I don't know," he said. "What's the use of it?"

Elise gazed at him with astonishment.

"Do you not know the good God," she said. "Look up in the sky, and see the moon and stars. Nay, nearer, look at my hand, and feel it as it bathes your head. Who made them?"

"Oh God! 'The first cause,' our German professor used to say. Yes, yes, it is true there must be a God," murmured the boy, "but I have never given the matter any thought, and it is too late now. If my mother had lived: she was a Catholic, and died when I was born. My father didn't care for religion, neither did I much, there was a time:—Well, it—is—too—late—now."

"Oh, no!" said Elise, "God is our Father, He would not leave His children without some knowl-

edge of the truth, and your mother's Church, the Catholic Church, is the only one which ever professes to hold infallible truth. God has sent me to tell you, He wishes you to die a Catholic like your mother."

"But it is too late, you cannot get a minister, and I am not good," said the poor lad, and the tears of despair, which his pain had not yet forced from him, ran down his troubled face.

"God is *so* good," said Elise softly, "that He lets even a little girl like me, bring you into the 'One True Fold' when there is no one better to do it. Will you not believe me?" she added coaxingly.

"I believe God sent you to me to-night," he said, "in answer to my dead mother's prayers, and that every word you say to me is truth."

"You know," said the child, "how long, long ago, God sent His Son to redeem us from sin. How He was born of a sinless mother, who then became also our mother, and then suffered and died on the cross to save us from death? You know of all this?"

"Oh, yes; I have heard it often, but somehow I never took it in before."

"And you know He left here, for His children, a Church which He promised should last till the end of time, and told us, Himself, that there should be but 'One Fold, One Church, and One Shepherd;' will you not enter that Fold and be safe?" said Elise with all the fervor and earnestness of her heart in her voice.

"Oh, yes; oh yes! with all my heart, if I could," said the lad.

"Do you believe all I have told you?" said she.

"I know, I feel it is true," said he faintly.

Then repeat after me: slowly and fervently, they made together the acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Then Elise emptying the last drops of water from his canteen on his head, as she knelt beside him, repeated the baptismal formula, saying:

"James, if thou art not already baptized, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen!" Now be very sorry for your sins, with which you have offended the dear Lord, and make an act of contrition." Slowly, falteringly but fervently he repeated after her, she holding his clasped hands, "never—never more to offend Thee."

"I see, I see the angel!" said the poor lad, his face brightening. "Jesus, Mother," a slight struggle, and he was gone, while our poor child, now quite exhausted, fell fainting across his dead body.

Great was the wonder of the ambulance surgeon, when, a few hours later, he picked up the unconscious child. He shook his head gravely as he examined her, and then had her laid in the ambulance. She did not fully recover her consciousness, until a week later, after a long, weary journey, she came to herself in the hospital at Washington, under the care of the Sisters of Charity.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOSPITAL.

THE sun was doing his best to flood the children's ward of the Sisters' hospital in Washington. It was the brightest and most sunshiny room of the whole district. The long eastern side of the ward was made almost entirely of glass, but now, it was too warm to allow the sun free entrance, and the ward was shaded by large awnings on that side, but the open windows had converted the ward into a balcony for the day and the children who were up, were making the most of it. Opposite this open window were long rows of little beds, with spotless covers. Some, indeed the greater part, were filled, with that saddest of all sights, sick and suffering little children. They did not look sad. Most of them had happy, expectant faces. They were dressed in bright colored flannel bed sacks and had their playthings within easy reach. But pale, attenuated little faces, and that dreadful weight hanging at the foot of the bed, told the sad tale of the suffering children of Eve.

In one corner our little girl was lying. Alas! too easily was it seen that the night's exposure on the battle field had proved too much for her frail body. She was bolstered up in a half sitting posture with pillows. Her cheeks were flushed with fever, and occasionally a cough shook her from head to foot. It was by a miracle that she had recovered from the severe attack of pneumonia which followed that dreadful night, especially as it was necessary to move her at the height of her fever, but she would not die; in all delirium there was but one cry: "To go to papa. I must go to papa," and they could only quiet her by the promise that she should go, was going, though it has generally thought that her father had been killed in the battle.

Now, she is looking very happy though she has come to a realizing sense of her position. She knows that she is too weak now to go farther alone, but watches and prays intently for the chance to keep on still for that unknown place, New York.

The ward at this early morning hour, is a scene of cheerful confusion. The day nurses have just come on duty, and the black-capped Sisters moved everywhere, striving to produce 'order out of chaos,' before the doctors' rounds.

The Sister in charge is at the medicine closet, at the end of the ward, and she tinkles a little bell to denote that she will give the after-breakfast medicines. At this signal all the children, who are up,

make a general rush for her. The crutches and splints rattle up the tiled floor, and one poor little fellow, not the last by any means, swings himself along, using his hands as crutches, and swinging himself between them.

Sister Genevieve had had the care of this ward for many years. One glance at her sweet face, now showing the marks of old age, would convince you that the community had chosen wisely and well in giving her the care of the little ones. She was one of those few women who are gifted with great executive ability. No matter how heavy or trying the work might be, it was always so arranged that it went on as smoothly as if run by machinery, but with a certain snap and energy which carried all before it. Her juniors loved her dearly, but knew that nothing less than the best, done exactly to the minute, would answer when working under her surveillance. Her superiors recognizing this, kept her training new subjects, so that she used to say her ward was the novitiate of the hospital.

Buttons, the little fellow who has just swung himself up for his medicine, was so named by a young doctor on account of his suit of clothes which was covered with bright gilt buttons, when he was brought to the hospital by his mother. He was a bright, chubby little fellow, with round red cheeks, and brown eyes and hair. The hair curls so tightly around his head as to be a subject of great grief to him, and an

occasion of war, when the young girl, employed by the Sisters for that purpose, endeavors to comb it. He comes to a stop at Sister Genevieve's side and looks expectantly up to her face.

"Here, Buttons," said the Sister, handing him the glass with an air of conferring the greatest favor.

Buttons eyed the glass suspiciously, and then glanced earnestly and inquiringly into the Sister's face, saying :

"Is dat good med, my Sister? is dat good med?"

Now the medicine in question was cod liver oil, into which the Sister had dropped some syrup of iron, about as vile a concoction as one could be asked to swallow, but knowing too well by sad experience that there was no power in the Capitol sufficient to persuade, or force Buttons to swallow it if she said "No," she said : "Very good, Buttons," adding a mental reservation that it was good in her sense of the word.

Buttons tooks the glass without further demur, and with confidence swallowed the medicine. He then looked at the glass with some surprise, and handed it back to the Sister with an inquiring look, as much as to say :

"You are sure you have not made a mistake about that."

Sister Genevieve gives an affirmative little nod as if to say :

"Did you ever see anything equal to that?" and at

the same time proffers a bit of candy, of which a store is always kept in her medicine closet. Buttons is too much of a gentleman to think of doubting her word, and so decided his senses must have deceived him, and that his cod liver oil and iron were really nectar and ambrosia, and so swings off quite happy. Soon his sweet, clear voice rings through the ward as he rocks himself back and forth in a little rocking boat and sings an accompaniment of a popular song.

Again the bell tinkles, and every child, who is up, scrambles to his little chair at the foot of his bed. As the three doctors enter the ward for morning rounds, silence and order reign supreme. This was a well known law, and like that of the Medes and Persians, "It altereth not."

Let us follow the doctors in their rounds, and make acquaintance with the dear children.

Lina is the first visited. The poor little one is lying back in a baby's perambulator. She has straight black hair which is kept back smoothly from her white, thin face by a round comb, black eyes which twinkle like a canary's, delicate, refined features with a clear white skin, which is too often flushed with fever. She is dead—that is to say, completely paralyzed—below the waist, and otherwise deformed in a manner terrible to see. Although she is nine years old, she has to be dressed like a baby each day and then laid in her perambul-

ator, to be wheeled about wherever her fancy takes her. She was long ago decided as incurable, but Sister Genevieve has begged so hard to keep her, that her sentence of banishment, pronounced by the doctors, has been repealed, and however deformed her poor body may be, her heart and brain are sound and true. She is a good instance of the law of compensation, for you can nowhere find a happier child, never was she unhappy. There were no fretful or irritable days for her, she was deeply attached to the little novice who has the care of her, only on one point they disagreed. Lina had a great liking for strong tea, as nearly all invalids have. The novice in question had a prejudice against it, thinking milk better for her.

"Lina," she remonstrates, as the child begged for more, "if you drink so much tea, you will be an old maid."

There was silence for a moment as Lina turned this new idea over in her brain. Lina, with her other misfortunes stammered, and she broke out with :

"Wha—wh—what is an old maid, Sister? Are you an old maid?"

"Yes, Lina," said the young novice in a sad and solemn tone.

Another moment of reflection and then in a tone of surprise.

"We—we—well then, I—I—I'd jist lief be an old maid as not."

The sweet flattery of childhood won, and Lina got her tea. Dear little Lina, not long were you kept in the sad prison of your suffering body and by that same most just and merciful law of compensation you surely gained an additional degree of happiness in Heaven, which far more than repays your few years of suffering here.

The doctors have not much to say to Lina, she is incurable and consequently an uninteresting case.

They passed on to that corner bed which is screened from the rest of the ward, lest chance visitors should find its occupant too distressing a sight. He is a tall, thin, awkward lad of about twelve years of age, with chronic meningitis which causes terrible swellings and discharges from his ears. He is in bed most of the time from weakness and pain, but occasionally comes out from his seclusion to join the noisy crowd. Especially is he given to nocturnal rambles and chats with the night nurse, who was instructed to let him have his way, for Stephen likes solitude. He was born and brought up in the heart of the Virginia Mountains. It is hard to believe that even in this naughty world of ours there can be beings so hard and selfish as Stephen's relatives. He was brought to the Sisters by the police, and this was his story :

His uncle, weary of the care of a chronic invalid, thought the easiest way of disposing of an unwelcome burden, was to abandon him in the streets of

the city. It was sad to see the lad's homesickness at first. He could not be reconciled to exchanging his beloved woods for a city hospital. Who could blame him? Day and night he moaned and wept, and as he was the saddest of all; he became, in consequence, Sister Genevieve's special charge. All she could do to please and comfort him, was of no avail however:

"To go home! to go home! to go home," was his one sad cry.

Gradually this wore away and Sister Genevieve felt all her pains and troubles were well repaid when he said to her one day, shyly:

"Sister, I like to be here"

After this, all went well. He had aroused the sympathy of all, and the little space behind the screen around his bed was filled with colored cards and other little gifts from the doctors and other friends.

Poor Stephen; he did not live very long. Happy Stephen! for he received the grace of baptism which he would not have had in his mountain home. Another proof that the cross means "addition not subtraction."

The bed next Stephen is occupied by little Ned. He has chronic erysipelas and his face just now is so swollen and inflamed that his eyes were closed tight, so that he was temporarily blind. Imagine the situation: a pauper, blind, and in addition to

this, the burning, itching, intolerable sensation connected with the inflammation of the skin. What would we be doing, friends, under such circumstances?

This is what little Ned was doing. Sitting up in his crib, he rocks himself back and forth and sings in an exquisitely clear voice that fills the ward :

“Wait till the clouds roll by, love,
Wait till the clouds roll by.”

He is touched by a scandalized neighbor, and his blind eyes reminded that it is “rounds,” when he relapses into silence.

In the next bed is Fritzie, the Dutchman, only three years old. He came into the world badly deformed, and there is no hope of cure, or even improvement. He has a good mother, who comes frequently to the hospital to see him. She has not the heart to take him away, but leaves him, hoping against hope ; while the doctors let him remain, a sort of curiosity. Perhaps, too, they also hope that someone will one day make a grand discovery and cure Fritzie. He has a great, pale full-moon face. His vocabulary consists of one word : “Top”—stop.—This has many meanings and tones, as he addresses himself to doctor, nurse or child ; friend or enemy. He has also a very pugnacious temper, and the young doctors, when making their rounds, can never resist the temptation to stir it up by teasing him.

Can any one tell us, why the sterner sex carry the boy's love of teasing to the grave?

This morning Fritz is seated quietly in his little chair, at the foot of his bed, clasping tightly a beloved toy, over which he beams benevolently like a small Pickwick.

"Here give that to me, Fritz," says a doctor, commandingly.

A glance of contempt and defiance, and a closer hugging of the toy is the only response. Then a snatch at it from the doctor, just missing it, which Fritz meets by calling out "Top!" in a low, but very prolonged tone, with just a shadow of a scream in it, at the same time glancing at the Sister, to see if she was observing this breach of rules; but the doctor perseveres, and the "Top" soon rises to screams, and roars, so Fritz must be taken from the ward before the rounds can proceed, leaving the Sister much more inclined to administer justice to the older boy than to the younger.

Then comes our Elise, and the doctor bends over the child, listens to her lungs and looks very sober.

"How is Elise this morning?" he asks cheerfully.

"Better, doctor, almost well," she replies, looking at him entreatingly.

"Wanting to start for New York on foot, eh?"

A decisive nod shows how the heart is still yearning for her father, and how gladly would she escape to go on as before, were she able.

"How would it do to write the father to come here?" said the doctor.

"Oh, will you? Can he come? Is it far?" said the child, eagerly.

"We will try, at any rate," said the doctor smilingly. "What is his address?"

"New York," said she promptly.

"But the street and number."

"I don't know," she said, with a crestfallen face.

The doctor gave a low whistle, and glanced at the Sister.

"Do you think the end is near?" said Sister Genevieve, as they walked away.

"She cannot last long with that pulse and temperature," said he. "She is a charming little one, and how she could have been allowed to stray so passes my comprehension."

"I will advertise in the New York papers," said the Sister.

"You had better do so to-night," replied the doctor. "And God grant that the father gets it in time."

Next Elise, was a girl of about ten years of age, with bold black eyes which stared at the doctor defiantly.

"Doctor," said Sister Genevieve, "Why does Nancy reject everything from her stomach? She cannot even keep down a little water."

"Sister," said the doctor, drawing himself up and

looking at the girl keenly. "I believe it is nothing but pure cussedness."

"Then I wonder you don't vomit more yourself," said the girl saucily.

The young man exploded with laughter at the retort, but the Sister looked gravely reproving. Nancy had been in the hospital about a week, and everything that the doctor's skill could invent had been tried on her in vain. The doctor was now beginning to understand the case, and he turned to the Sister saying :

"This girl is not to have anything, either of food, drink, or medicine, until five o'clock to-night, and not then, unless she wants it, and can retain it."

The cure is effectual. Nancy has no more trouble. She was a poor untaught child, whose strange, uncouth ways had been a great trial to both Sisters and children in the past week and was also very strong in her likings and aversions. She was devoted to Elise from the first, and was never so happy as when allowed to do anything for her, but she had an equally strong aversion to others which she took no pains to conceal. For instance, there was a certain Sister who came daily, for an hour in the afternoon, to relieve Sister Genevieve from her duties. She was very good and conscientious, but had very little sympathy with the children, and felt her duty accomplished if her orders were carefully executed, and the ward kept in order. She found

Nancy a great obstacle in the way of preserving order, and they were constantly running in contact.

"I hate her," Nancy would confide to Elise. "I hate her in the worst way. Never mind I'll be even with her yet; you'll see."

Elise tried in vain to bring Nancy to a better state of mind. The aversion grew, and Nancy only waited to find a chance for retaliation, for being constantly reported, and brought to order. The Sister in question was tall, awkward, retiring, and shy.

She was delighted one afternoon, to have Nancy propose a general game, instead of stealing off by herself, for mischief, as usual.

"It's a perfectly lovely game, Sister," she said, with a wicked wink at the children. "May I teach it to you and the children?"

The Sister assented warmly and watched, with an amused smile, Nancy's efforts to bring all the children up to form a large semi-circle at the head of the ward. She had to assist her, finally, for the children were suspicious and afraid of Nancy's games and plans. When this was at length accomplished, Nancy begged the the Sister to take her place at the head of the circle facing the entire length of the ward and then, after standing behind her back and making the most hideous grimaces at her, thereby greatly scandalizing the children, she made all promise to do exactly what she told them at a given

signal. Then she went the rounds and whispered in each one's ear that she was to keep still and do nothing until she came to the poor innocent Sister. She impressed it upon her that she was to spring to her feet, and shout "Kangaroo—oo—oo," as loud as she could.

The Sister was too good, herself, to suspect mischief, and thinking she would not be heard in the general confusion, readily promised to obey. Nancy heard approaching footsteps, and waited a little, till she saw them about to enter the ward, and then gave the signal.

"One—two—three."

The poor Sister sprang to her feet, as she had promised, and called out loudly: "Kangaroo—oo—oo!" and then looked up to meet the utterly astonished eyes of the Sister-Servant—as the Sisters of Charity so beautifully call their Superior—who was showing a party of visitors through the hospital with Dr. Morse and those of the paralyzed children, who thought something terrible had happened. There was a dreadful pause of silence, then the children broke into a merry peal of laughter, and the doctor who took it all in at a glance, threw himself into a chair, and fairly rocked to and fro with laughter. The dignified Superior quickly drew her wondering visitors through the ward, and the poor victimized Sister, coloring painfully, tried to say a "Deo Gratias," for her

humiliation, as she turned again to her duties. Nancy, a little frightened at the success of her plot, crept in beside Elise's bed.

"Oh Nancy! how could you?" said the horrified Elise.

"I don't care, the old cat, I said I'd pay her off," said Nancy, with nevertheless, an uneasy air of defiance about her.

"But what will our Sister say?" said Elise sorrowfully. She had grown fond of this child of the people, and was anxious to screen her.

"Nothing to me," said Nancy coolly, "for here comes my mother to take me home."

As she spoke, a stout woman, wearing a flashy shawl and bonnet came walking up the ward, and the Sister went forward to meet her.

"Have you a gurl here by the name of Nancy Ray?" said the woman.

The Sister nodded assent, and motioned Nancy to come forward.

"Sure thin', I've kim to take her away to the réform school, no less, I tould her whin she came here that it was the last chance I'd give her, at all, at all, an' her fayther he said the same foreby an' I've been tould she's been playin' it on the howly nuns, thimselves, as she did on us, and sure there's no other place for her, but the lockin' up, though it breaks my very heart to say it. May the Lord forgive her."

"I won't go," said Nancy defiantly, "I'll run away."

"Then, go you will, you bad childer. Your Uncle John himself an' no other, is waiting beyant to slip the handcuffs on yez, and put yez in his black cart, if yez makes any trouble at all, at all."

Poor Nancy turned pale at hearing this, for her Uncle John was the only one living, of whom she stood in fear.

"May the Lord be between us and all harum, Sister," said the mother again turning to the Sister. "But it's her Uncle John, who is a policeman, and he the only one in this mortal world, who kin make her mind, and he knows too well the throuble that child has given us. She's the youngest of all me sivin, and the only one who has not done well. She was the smartest, and perhaps I spoilt her. The Lord forgive me — but she's got beyant me now entirely, entirely! 'Twas only last St. Patrick's Day, Sister, whin she lay in fits on me bed, and all the neighbors in to see her draw her last breath, and me old man gone fer the priest beyant, and while we was prayin' the procession wint by, and we jist slipped to the windy a minit, an' whin we wint back to the childer again she wasn't there at all, at all. What should the spalpeen do, but whin me back was turned, but rin down the stairs and out on the strates, she who was dying a minit before, an folly that procession the rest of the day. And me that was

shamed whin the howly father kim, that I couldn't raise me eyes to his face, to tell him the whole truth. 'Mrs. Ray,' he says, 'I fear ye'll sup throuble wid her yet,' an' so I hev indade. Well I giv her fair warning, whin she tuk sick agin an' I sint her here, that it wor her last chance, and her father the same, an' now she'll have to go where she'll be made to behave herself."

The Sister looked at Nancy. The child seemed petrified with fear, and stood gazing at her, with imploring eyes, clasped hands and white face.

"Nancy," said she gently, "if I ask our mother to keep you here, will you be good?"

In an instant the child was on her knees at the Sister's side clinging to her habit, weeping violently, and hiding her face in the folds.

"Oh Sister!" she said, "if you will only keep me I will be good, indeed, indeed I will be the best girl in the house."

"If you will leave her until to-morrow, Mrs. Ray," said the Sister, "I will speak to the Superior, and let you know what she says."

"Indade, Sister, you're far too good, for the likes as her, an' me and my man will be forever grateful to yez."

The mother departed, never knowing how little her child deserved such kindness at the Sister's hands; but the children who were looking on anxiously, some of them crying, learned a lesson of Christian forgiveness never forgotten.

It proved the turning point in Nancy's life. She became as wax in the hands of the hated Sister, and true to her word a great comfort and support of the community. Of course it took long years of patient training, but in the end she came forth—a perfect religious.





CHAPTER XIX.

THE ARTIST.

THE northern end of the children's ward, in the Sisters' Hospital, was nearly filled with a large open fireplace. A jet of gas was always kept burning in this, when it was not cool enough to have a fire, and by this means, a constant ventilation was preserved. Around the fireplace was an iron guard to preserve the babies from accident, and over it a text illuminated in bright colored letters :

“Lord, behold ! he whom Thou lovest is sick.”

By the side of each little bed was a stand, sacred to the occupant of the bed, where the children's little gifts, playthings and various treasures were kept. Pretty, bright chromos were hung on the wall over the beds, and a deep bay window had been transformed into a Shrine of Our Lady, by lining it with English ivy and surrounding the statue with the long graceful leaves of the calla lilies, palms and ferns. This was partly concealed by a screen, with a dark background, on which the children had pasted their most valued 'holy cards', as they called

the little cards printed with sacred pictures, which were given them. Happy was the child who was permitted to give a flower to Our Lady's Shrine, and the charge of it was the greatest honor possible to receive.

The various little charges which the children were permitted to undertake were subjects of great delight, and helped in no small degree to preserve order in the ward. Next in honor to the shrine, was the keeping of Sister's table in perfect order, dusting and putting pens, paper, etc., in exact squares; while little Ned Blackstone announced triumphantly to his friends, one day, when on a visit to him, that he was "boss of the hammock."

One Saturday morning after Elise had entered the hospital, Sister Genevieve was sitting on a baby's chair in the room off the ward, which was devoted to her use, with a large bag of stockings before her, from which she was vainly endeavoring to pick a sufficient number of matched pairs to give each child clean ones on the morrow. The children as usual were all collected around her. Splints and crutches struck out in every direction.

Buttons pulled himself up by the back of the little chair, on which she was seated, and peered round in her face with the most coaxing and winning way imaginable; he stood on his well foot, and waved the lame one wildly and persuasively round in the air and remarked :

"Please, Sister, I pe de doctor, an' you pe de case."

Sister Genevieve resigned herself to the situation, and still endeavored to pick out and match stockings, while she was having her pulse felt, her lungs sounded, and Tessie, who had been called up as nurse, received some astounding orders in stern and dictatorial tones. Jack, the ward cat, sat on a table near by surveying the scene approvingly. He was a Maltese cat of immense size, very dignified and reserved. The boldest child never ventured any liberties, and he only permitted special favorites to stroke him. He was especially devoted to Sister Genevieve, however, following her around like a dog, jumping on the table near her, whenever she sat down to write, and if she did not speak to him, he would put out his paw, and knock her pen, to the great disaster of the writing. Sometimes he would spring from the floor to her shoulder, to the amusement of the children.

The Sister-Servant entered the ward with the same gentleman who had visited the hospital on the day in which poor Sister's humiliation was given by Nancy. This broke up Button's clinic as Sister Genevieve went forward to greet them.

The gentleman was introduced to her as an artist, who had come to beg leave to make some studies of the children's faces. He could hardly reply to Sister Genevieve's greetings as he looked up the ward at Elise's bed.

"Did you ever see anything more beautiful?" he said enthusiastically.

Nancy had been permitted to come from the laundry, where she was working, to make a visit to Elise. She was making a silk quilt, and had the bright pieces spread out on Elise's bed, and the two were bending over them, earnestly discussing the arrangement of colors. The contrast in the two faces was almost startling. Nancy's full round face, rather dull and sensual, and the delicate, spiritual look of the other, bending over her, like her guardian angel.

The Sister-Servant smiled a little sadly, and replied to the artist :

"It means to us, I fear, the beauty which must shortly leave us. Her symptoms show that the little one is fast getting ready for heaven."

"Truly," said he, "I think you are right. Her body seems only a most beautifully transparent veil through which the soul shines, impatient to be set free."

"Has anything been heard from her father?" asked Sister Genevieve.

"Nothing," said the Sister-Servant.

"I was just telling the Superior," said the artist, to Sister Genevieve, "that we artists always like to go to Catholic schools and institutions for our children's faces. There is a mysterious charm in their expression which we find nowhere else. I

cannot tell where it comes from. I have no religion myself, but all my artist friends, and I have scores of them, tell me the same thing."

"The expression you fancy, comes from the reception of the Sacraments," said Sister Genevieve, as they advanced up the ward toward Elise.

"Elise," said the Sister-Servant, "here is a gentleman who wishes to take your picture."

Elise looked up at the gentleman very calmly, and replied :

"Papa had our pictures taken at Christmas, and I don't think he would want them again so soon, and besides I have no money to pay for them."

"My dear child," said the artist, smiling at her simplicity, "I do not mean to take more than one picture, and I will pay you for that, as I want to keep it for myself."

"But you do not know me!" said the child.

"No, but I would like your face in a picture I am painting," said he.

"Do you want to put me in a picture to hang on the wall?"

"Yes."

"But that would be a pity, I would not do. Henri said I should never be pretty, and now my hair is all cut off."

"If it would not tire you too much," said the Superior, "I will allow the gentleman to come a little time each afternoon to paint you. Will that interfere

in anything else?" said she turning to Sister Genevieve.

"Not at this hour, my Sister," answered Sister Genevieve.

So it was arranged, but as they were turning away, Elise called the artist back, and said rather shyly :

"Did you say you would pay me some money?"

"Yes," said the artist amused at the child's precociousness. "She has the Yankee spirit after all," he thought with a sense of disappointment. "How much do you want?"

"Oh! I want so much to get to New York, and I cannot walk any more, you see. I must go to my papa. Would that cost more than you could pay me?"

"No."

"Will it take you very long?"

"No: I will give you enough money to take you to New York, and I will not be long; but better, I will write to a friend of mine, who will find him if he is in the city, and send him here."

Elise caught his hand, and kissed it, with childlike grace and simplicity, and the artist felt himself well repaid by the radiant, grateful look which stole over her little face as she lay back on her pillows. They left her. Nancy gazed at her anxiously. Elise smiled at her reassuringly, and said :

"I think it is the pain in my side, Nancy; if you

would make me one of your nice mustard plasters, dear."

Nancy flew off to beg the materials, and soon returned with the plaster made just as Elise liked them, so that they would warm the skin without making it smart. Shall I tell you how that was? She put in only a half teaspoonful of mustard, and two teaspoonfuls of flour; she wet this with exactly two teaspoonfuls of warm water, so that it would not be too wet, and soil her patient's clothing. It took a good deal of stirring to make it nice and smooth, and free from lumps; then she carefully spread this on a piece of old muslin, and covered the face of the plaster with the same, the edges of the muslin were then carefully turned in.

"Leave it where I can look at it," said Elise, one day to Nancy, when she removed it. "They have been such a comfort to me."

When Nancy had applied the plaster, and turned away to wash her hands, Jack did a very strange thing. He had been sitting on Nancy's stool, in the meantime, gravely looking at Elise as if trying to form a diagnosis, but now he bounded from the stool, kicked his heels high in the air, and with tail erect, bounded around the ward, and then disappeared in the Sister's room. The children shouted, and Elise joined in the laugh, in spite of the pain.

"What can be the matter with Jack?" she said, "how funny he acts."

"He wanted to smell of your mustard plaster," said Nancy demurely, "and I let him."

"Oh! Nancy, his poor nose will smart, give him some water when you wash your hands."

"All right," said Nancy, "but I don't think he'll take it from me."

When Nancy came back she found it nearly four, and seeing that Elise was weary, she commenced packing away her silks with rather a downcast air.

Elise tenderly took her hand, when she had finished, saying: "What is it, Nannie?"

"Oh! Elise," said Nancy hiding her tears in the child's pillow, "I do want to be good, and please the Sisters, but they are so particular and hard to please. They want you to look just so, speak just so, and walk just so. I think some times I can't bear it, I must run away."

There was a little pause, and Elise drew the rough head down by her side on the bed, and tenderly smoothed the hair, whispering:

"You would not do that for my sake, Nannie?"

A pressure of the little hand, was the only response.

"Nannie, do you remember that dreadful woman that you told me was brought in here last week?"

A mute affirmative movement of the head.

"You said she was more like an animal than a Christian, and that you had to burn up her clothes they were in such a dreadful condition. I suppose

she was a young girl like you and me once, and I think that is why the Sisters seem so particular. We have to master ourselves, or ourselves will master us, and that is why we must not allow ourselves to sit in lounging, lazy postures, to take great pains to be neat in our person, and not to run up stairs, or laugh, and talk in a loud, rough way, or else our bodies will be the master, and we the servant, and then we shall fall as low as that poor drunken woman.

"Oh ! Elise," said Nancy, lifting her head, "I could never be like that. I should always be respectable."

"I don't know," said Elise shaking her head, wisely, "Father Lawrence used to say that we all had a wild beast within us, which we must conquer, or it would conquer us, and although the Sisters may try to help us, no one, not even God, could do it for us. We must do it ourselves by the help of His grace."

Elise bowed her head over Nancy's, praying with all her heart for this poor child, who was having so hard a struggle with her wild nature. The clock struck four and all the children blessed themselves saying the Hail Mary according to custom. Then Nancy rose saying with firm determination.

"I will conquer myself or die. I will do it if only to please you."



CHAPTER XX.

PAPA, AT LAST.

THE severe pain felt by Elise, on the afternoon of Nancy's visit, proved the beginning of a fresh attack of her disease. The child sank rapidly after this, had constant high fever, and was either in delirium or stupor most of the time.

Nancy's grief and devotion were so great that she was appointed special nurse and was permitted to stay with her constantly, except the hours in which the Sisters thought it necessary for her to take off duty, for her health.

Nothing had been heard from M. de la Roche, in spite of all the attempts that had been made to discover him, and as a last resort the Chaplain had written to the Jesuit College, in New York, to see if the Fathers there could find any trace of him. All were praying very earnestly that he might arrive in time and the child seemed holding to the frail thread which bound her here for that purpose only.

It was about a week after the artist's visit, that M. de la Roche suddenly arrived with Father Grey, the Jesuit,

who had been on the steamer with Elise. It was about nine o'clock in the evening, but the danger of death seemed imminent, and the Superior took them directly to the ward. All the children were in bed, the gas was turned down very low. In a room at the end of the ward, sat the night nurse, where, from her chair, she could see the entire ward. The gas jet in this room was up, for the Sister was busy sewing. She rose, as she heard the door open, and came forward to meet them with a look of inquiry on her face. When she heard who the gentleman was that the Superior was bringing to the ward, her face became radiant with happiness, and the four walked softly together, up between the rows of sleeping children. It was a pity the artist was not there then to catch the grace of the attitudes of the sleeping children. Elise was asleep propped up on her pillows. Nancy had not yet left her for the night, but sat with her head lying on the side of the bed. Elise's hand still rested on it. The girl's dark eyes surveyed the group questioningly, but she dared not raise her head lest she would wake her sleeping charge. The corners of her mouth were drooping with sorrow, and the eyes heavy with unshed tears.

M. de la Roche stood immovable, gazing at his sleeping child so sadly changed since he had parted from her on the landing at Regalia. Elise stirred in her sleep and moaned a little, and then suddenly

opened her eyes, sat up, and stretched out her arms crying :

"Papa, at last ; papa, my own papa, at last, at last !"

Then the father and child were locked in the closest embrace. Nancy rose, and the Superior drew her away, at the same time pushing a chair for the poor father, who sat down in it still holding Elise in his arms. The others withdrew to the Sister's room, leaving them alone.

"Papa," she said, "they want me at home, in Heaven, but I would not go, until I had seen you first."

There was no response only a little closer embrace.

"May I go, papa?"

"Oh Elise, my darling, my only hope, how can I spare you?"

There was a little silence, then Elise put up her hand caressingly and patted his cheek ; it was cold, very cold, and the hand wandered to his forehead, it was wet with drops of cold sweat. She became alarmed, and raising herself looked at his face.

"My Sister, my Sister," she called in an alarmed tone.

The Sister on night duty came quickly to her side, and Elise taking her hand put it on her father's forehead, saying :

“My poor papa is sick, he wants some medicine.”

“No, dear,” said her father in a strained unnatural voice—he was evidently making a great effort for composure—“medicine will not help papa.”

The Sister smiled, and said :

“Truly, sir, you do stand greatly in need of rest and refreshment, and the little one has had all that she can bear to-night. Will you not bid her good night, and then come with me for a cup of tea?”

The poor father shook his head, and held his child more closely ; it seemed to him unsafe to leave her, even for a minute, lest she should vanish again from his sight.

“The naughty papa ;” said Elise, playfully, “did you not hear Sister, and don’t you know we have to mind her. Put me down on my bed, and go directly.”

The father still hesitated, but as the Sister shook out the pillows, and straightened the bed, he laid her down for a little, and followed the Sister to please the child, intending to return soon and take up the watch. Elise sank back with an expression of supreme content in her face.

The gentleman who had entered the ward with him now came forward and said :

“Have you no word for me, Elise?”

“Father Grey ! Another ! how good God is,” said she fervently. “Oh ! how did you get here ? and where are the rest ?”

"We must not talk about it to-night," said he; "I will only tell you that all were saved, picked up by another steamer, and carried to New York. Your father met us, and we had to tell him that you were lost. When we got word at the college that you were here, I lost no time in telling your father, and we came on together to capture the runaway."

"Will you tell me one thing, Father? Does papa need me? very much, I mean?"

"My little daughter," said the Father, "you may be sure he does. I have been at your home, Elise, and it is not a happy one. It is very different from what I have heard of Regalia. Your mother misses her servants and is most unhappy. The boys need a sister to keep them off the streets, and Henri, to make him go punctually to school. Your father needs a little daughter's sympathy, and some one to brighten him when he returns to a sad home at night. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Father," said the child, "I understand." She lay still for a moment with her eyes closed, and her hands clasped as in prayer, then she spoke again: "Father Grey, they were going to bring me my Viaticum tomorrow morning. I was anointed to-day. Now I want you to persuade the Sister to let me go to the Chapel tomorrow for Holy Communion, and I am going to ask the Sacred Heart to cure me, for papa, and I will get our Blessed Lady and St.

Vincent de Paul to pray for me too, and you, dear Father, will you not?"

Her father now returned for the night, and Elise sat up in the bed, and putting her arms round his neck said :

"Papa, you are disobedient. I want you to go to bed ; you need not be afraid, I am going to get well, and will go back home with you tomorrow."

The father looked at her in consternation, he thought her wandering, and said soothingly :

"The Sister is willing I should stay with you, Elise. I would rather not leave you now I have at last found you."

The thought of how he had found her, and how soon he must again lose her, forced a sob from the strong man. But the child entreated so earnestly that they were obliged to give way to her and he allowed Father Grey to lead him away, promising to attend mass in the hospital chapel in the morning.

"Nancy" called Elise after they had gone. Nancy went to her and found, as she feared, the child in great nervous excitement with burning fever.

"Nancy," she whispered, "I must get well, papa needs me."

Nancy was silent.

"I want the relic of St. Vincent de Paul. Go now, and ask Sister Genevieve."

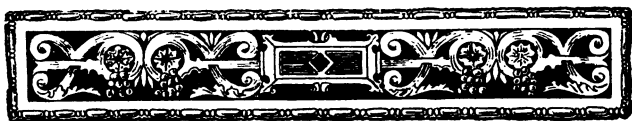
Nancy hesitated, but the child was so in earnest and excited that she went for Sister Genevieve, who

brought the relic, and hung it around the child's neck. Then she insisted on seeing everything she needed laid out for the morning, and after this took her sedative and went quietly to sleep while saying her rosary. She slept quietly, until just before midnight, when she woke with a loud cry. The night Sister went to her side and found her in such pain that she started for the doctor.

"No, Sister, no," gasped the child, "not the doctor, but my bottle of Lourdes water."

She had had one presented her some weeks before but for some unknown reason had refused to use it. The Sister brought the bottle in silence, unsealed and drew out the cork. The child drank and then made the Sister sponge her with the remainder from head to foot. She was immediately relieved, and sank to sleep once more, and slept quietly until morning.





CHAPTER XXI.

A MIRACLE.

THE next morning, the sun shone brilliantly through the stained glass windows of the hospital chapel of the Sisters of Charity. It was a pretty chapel, by far the finest room in the house. The reredos was of dark oak, handsomely carved, and reached from the altar to the ceiling. The altar also was of oak, but the tabernacle was carved from the purest white marble with doors of polished brass. In the reredos above the tabernacle was a painting of the Ascension, our Lord in the act of ascending, with His hands stretched out in blessing and with a pitying expression in His eyes, which seemed to say:

“What can I do for you; before I am taken away from you?”

The floor of the chapel was tiled in black and white marble; in the sanctuary were some handsome rugs spread, to prevent noise and colds. On the eastern side of the sanctuary was a large stained glass window, representing the Good Shepherd carrying the lamb on His shoulders, through which, as

we have said, the sun was shining brightly, saucily tinting the black cambric caps, with red, blue, and yellow, and adding more light to the peaceful faces, which shone already with the light of interior peace. The light from the Good Shepherd even streamed across and lightened the opposite window, on the west side. This was a representation of St. Vincent de Paul, holding the little ones in his arms, with others grasping his soutane as they stood at his feet, as the saint is usually represented.

The seats for the children were in the eastern transept, at right angles with the main body of the chapel, raised a little higher than the rest, so that they were in full view of the congregation. They entered through a side door opening into the transept from a corridor connected with the ward, that the children might get their places as quickly and quietly as possible. It was necessary, for the clatter of the crutches and splints re-echoed through the chapel. The lame and halt were followed by quieter children, and then a wheeled chair on which lay our little Elise, supported by pillows. Her father was in the main body of the chapel, and gave a start of terror when he saw her rolled in. He accused the Sisters, in his heart, for great imprudence. She lay on the white pillows, with closed eyes, as white as the pillows themselves, but when he saw the smile, and that her lips were moving in prayer, he was reassured.

"How imprudent in the Sisters," he mentally exclaimed; "how could they have let her come out at this hour; there must be draughts up in that place." Then came the mental problem, which he knew must be solved. How could he leave his dying child, his heart's best beloved, and yet, what would they do without him, the bread winner and staff on whom all leaned at home?

He had secured a position as bookkeeper in an office down town, but he knew he was likely to lose it if his absence was prolonged, and the thought of that turned him cold with the knowledge of the consequences to them who looked to him as their provider.

The priest entered, and he strove to put away his distractions, and pray.

Father Grey celebrated the Mass this morning in place of the ordinary chaplain, giving Elise his intention. He intended to carry the Holy Communion to Elise after the others had received, but to the amazement of all present when the children went forward to receive, Elise stood up also, stepped from her carriage and went up with them.

The Sister in charge of the children started from her knees as if to stop her, but as at a signal from the Superior, who had been watching the child intently, she knelt again and the child went reverently forward with bowed head and clasped hands, and knelt down with the others. When she returned

again from the altar, she did not go back to her chair, but knelt in the pew, with the other children, upright, and without support, through the rest of the mass.

The others did not seem to notice her, they were very quiet and recollected. The atmosphere was redolent with solemn awe and peace ineffable.

When the children had finished their thanksgiving they rose to go out, and Elise walked out with them, as demurely and composedly as though nothing unusual had occurred, until they reached the corridor, and the chapel door closed behind them. Then she broke ranks, and so excited the others that they followed her bad example and all who were able flew with her down the long corridor, Elise at the head shouting as they ran into the ward:

"I am cured! I am cured!"

She was quickly followed by the Superior and her father who knew not what to expect, but were startled and anxious at what they had seen. Elise flew into her father's arms crying out:

"I told you so, papa. God has given me back to you. I asked Him to do it, and our Blessed Lady, and St. Vincent de Paul asked Him too, and He has cured me; I am well, quite well."

Dr. Morse followed next, looking rather grim and non-committal. He examined her lungs thoroughly, and then turned to the father, striking his stethoscope on his knee, as he said emphatically:

"I can only say, that yesterday the child's lungs weré in the last stages of disease, and to-day they are sound and well."

"Deo gratias," said the Superior fervently in a low tone, and then added to M. de la Roche. "It is not the first time that these things have been sent to us, but we find it best to keep very quiet about them." Her eyes filled with thankful tears as she spoke and she turned away to go to the chapel there to give thanks where they were due.

The poor father, deathly white, quite dazed and bewildered, kept the child close to him as long as he could, fearing an illusion and dreading to see her break down again; but she sent him off for his breakfast, and to make arrangements for their return home. She could hardly be persuaded to take her own for she wanted to visit every part of the hospital and announce her cure.

Nancy, not less rejoiced than the child herself, went with her and, hand in hand, they went from one room to another until every soul in the house had offered congratulations to the dear child, whom all had learned to love.

Toward noon, the chapel bell rang and all hastened to offer a solemn "Te Deum" to the Giver of all good. The child knelt on a prie-dieu, draped in white, in the middle of the Sanctuary. She was dressed in plain white, and crowned with a veil, and wreath of flowers. She appeared totally without

self-consciousness, with a solemn radiance in her face, and downcast eyes : absorbed in prayer."

After dinner the artist appeared, and was greatly surprised that the child had vanished from the ward, and must be sought for, in order to see him. He gazed at her in amazement and then said to the Superior, "a nervous attack; the child has a highly susceptible temperament, and has deceived us all. The shock of seeing her father has made her all right again."

The Superior smiled, and was silent, and the artist continued: "You have spoiled my little 'Mater Dolorosa.' This child would only ruin my picture; the likeness of the first is gone, and I must try to finish without it. What a pity!" He smiled ruefully at the Superior. "However, I would like a second sitting just to contrast the two faces."

"I am sorry to disappoint you," said the Superior, "but she leaves us to-night, her father cannot remain longer," who could not refrain from smiling at the artist's passion, so prevailing over all other sentiments.

He rose, and with a comical smile, took Elise's hand and led her outside the ward. When the child came back she had some broad gold pieces in her hand and going to the Superior she said, shyly: "He says that this is all mine, and that I have earned it, but I'm afraid papa may not like it," she added doubtfully.

"You know that you need some clothing, dear," said the Superior cheerfully, "and I think we will look on this as sent you for that purpose. Do you think it will tire you too much to go out with Sister Joseph and Nancy to buy some?"

Elise had come back to this world sufficiently to be delighted with the idea, and so spent the next few hours in getting the necessary clothing, and buying a gift for each special friend at the hospital, and the dear ones at home. Her father was not consulted in the matter, the Sisters deciding that they might rightfully spare him what would cost the proud Southerner so much. He had arranged to take the night train to New York and so Elise bade a tearful "Good-bye" with grateful thanks to the Sisters, and her many friends, and at last started for the end of her destination.

Her father was both touched and amused to watch the many opportunities she found for ministries of mercy and charity; first, it was a child who had fallen and hurt itself, then, an animal, then, a beggar, not one could he persuade her to pass without stopping to give a little consolation, or a few cents with which she seemed to have provided herself. He did not interfere but allowed her her own way in silence. His thoughts were occupied over the home to which he was taking her, and he was wondering how she would bear the change. When she was at last in her old place on her father's knee in the spacious

Pullman car, she gazed a little while on the landscape through which they were speeding, and then turning to her father she said :

“Papa, this is the best part of my journey north.”

“You have not told me about it yet, Elise,” said her father.

Then Elise began from the time that they had parted at the boat landing at Regalia, and told her father the history of all her adventures since, and he, hardly believing that such things were possible, held his breath at parts of her recital, and gave fervent thanks to Heaven that his darling had escaped unscathed.





CHAPTER XXII.

NEGLECTED GARDENS.

WHEN M. de la Roche looked for a home for his family, in New York, he was dismayed to see what was offered him within a price which was at all in proportion to his income. It was impossible to find anything, even decent, within the city proper, and at the expense of his own comfort, he decided that he must take the long ride into the country, twice a day, in order to give them anything of the comfort or privacy of a home. After a long search, he succeeded in securing the lower story of what had been once a fine mansion, but was now sinking into ruin for want of repairs.

The owner intended to put up a regular city block, when the city grew high enough to make it a desirable residence, and was now glad to rent it respectably at a low rent. Ruinous and decayed as the old manion was, it had fine grounds attached which would give the boys liberty to run without going on the street. The upper floor was occupied

by a Down East Yankee and his wife, who would not be troubled either by children of their own, or by those of their neighbor. War, in consequence, was soon declared. The Jenkyns, as they were called, devoted their half of the ground to raising fruit and vegetables of the most inviting kind for the market, and our little boys, living all day without any restraint, frequently invaded their neighbor's territory.

The Jenkyns side of the grounds was a most startling contrast to that of the Southerners, which was left to grow in utter neglect, with grass and weeds knee deep. The interior of the house offered the same contrast. No one of the Southerners had any idea of housekeeping or how to preserve order. M. de la Roche engaged an old woman to come daily, but it was little she did, and whenever she appeared Madame took refuge on the balcony, with her novel.

The family lived on canned goods, with baker's bread, pie and cake, but as the boys ran wild all day like little animals, they daily gained in animal life in spite of their meagre diet, and as they gained physically they also gained in sin. No wonder the poor father looked so dispirited and broken-down as to bring his child back from heaven. As they drew nearer home, he grew sadder and more abstracted, at the thought of to what he was carrying his child.

The afternoon of the day before the arrival of Elise and her father, may serve as a specimen of the way in which young plants will grow when left to themselves untrained and uncultivated.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when Henri, in company with his bosom friend, came in from a game of ball, tired and heated. Henri gave his ball and bat a toss on the lounge, making his mother start nervously, and looked about him with a discontented air.

"Oh we're so tired and hot, mamma, may we make some lemonade?"

"Yes, if you like," said Madame abstractedly without lifting her eyes.

"Well, where are the things? I wonder if there are any lemons, ice or sugar in the house?"

"I am sure I don't know, my son, go without, if you can't make it without interrupting me so much."

"I thought so," said Henri, opening the side board door and holding up a very uninviting-looking sugar bowl. "Those little rascals have emptied everything, as usual, and it's too hot to go out for more. Hulloo! what's this?"

"Oh! yes," said Madame, languidly, "that telegram came this morning, your papa is coming tomorrow, he might have had sufficient consideration to have come to-day, if he had remembered my unprotected position."

She wiped her eyes, but was prevented from more tears, by piercing shrieks coming in the back windows from the garden. They all ran out on the balcony, which overlooked the garden, and saw Mr. Jenkyns, stern and determined, standing at the end of his chief garden walk, with his legs spread wide apart to prevent the two little lads' egress, and flourishing a strap in his hand.

"I've got ye now, yer young sarpints," shouted Mr. Jenkyns, "come here now, and git your desarts."

"Henri! oh, Henri!" shrieked Madame! "save your little brothers from that cruel man."

"Nonsense, mamma!" said Henri, "he won't hurt them, and I don't wonder that he don't want his garden destroyed, I only hope he'll lick 'em well."

"You unnatural brother," sobbed his mother, "if you are afraid, run for the police."

The twins were a subject for a picture, as the two hung back together, at the end of the path, with feet, hands, and faces stained with fruit; bare-legged, and ragged, with long unkempt hair, looking so exactly alike, that it was impossible to distinguish one from the other. One of them hugged a little black kitten to his breast, which looked like a veritable witch's cat, perfectly black, without a single white hair, and each hair standing in a different direction, with green eyes, which glowed like living coals.

There was a pause, neither side liking to lead the

attack, Mr. Jenkyns fearing if he left his post at the end of the path, that he would lose his prey, and the twins uncertain what was the best manner of eluding the enemy.

There was a rapid exchange of glances between the two, a little nod, and then the foremost one dropped his head, and made a rush between the legs of the astonished Mr. Jenkyns knocking him completely down, rapidly followed by number two, who jumped over poor Mr. Jenkyns' prostrate form. They then flew around the corner of the house, and disappeared. Mr. Jenkyns gathered himself up, amid the shouts and laughter of the two older lads, and the derisive laugh of his wife, Jerusha, who had been watching the battle from an upper window. Madame did not smile, but with her head high in the air, disappeared inside, while Mr. Jenkyns, interiorly resolving to be even with them yet, went into the garden to repair damages.

"Come, Hen," said his school friend, "let's have a swim."

"All right," said Henri, "come on."

There was a brook which ran down the hill near the house, and emptied itself in the Hudson. It was a never ending delight to the lads, and M. de la Roche had encouraged them in building a swimming bath there, to keep them from the dangerous river. They had dug out quite a deep pool, and dammed up the brook to fill it; then they built a sort of rough

shantee over it, to answer the purpose of a bathing house; sawing out two square holes, near the roof, for the purpose of letting in light and air. Henri had affixed a padlock, of which he kept the key, to the door of the house, averring that it was too deep for the twins, and that they would get drowned. This caused perpetual rebellion on the part of these young men, and they had really become the torment of everyone about them, giving obedience to their father only, of whom they stood in some awe.

The two school boys were having a grand swimming exercise, when the window over them was suddenly darkened, and the little black kitten descended suddenly on Henri's back, sticking her claws deeply in, mewing and spitting at a great rate, and then leaping off into the pool, she swam rapidly round, and finally flew off out of the building, out the opening at the bottom.

"By George!" said Henri excitedly, rubbing his scratches, "those horrid little rats; let them look out for themselves, they shall smart for this."

"I never knew before that cats could swim so, did you, Henri?" said the friend, recovering himself with great difficulty from the shock, and trying to look sober.

"No," said Henri, "I wonder they don't go in swimming oftener, but I hope they don't take my back to dive from."

The boys decided they had better leave, before a

worse thing came through the window. They dressed themselves, and went up again to the house.

"Come up to my room," said Henri, "I've got the stunningest red necktie you ever saw, that I want to show you."

They were ascending the steps of the back piazza, as he spoke.

"He wears it when Miss Pollard comes," sang out a high nasal tone over their heads. They looked up and there curled up on the rafters of the open roof, were the twins, and the inevitable black kitten grinning down upon them.

"Never you mind, young men, you and I will settle scores before you sleep to-night," said Henri vindictively.

The twins were remarkably silent, and Henri led the way to his room. When he opened his door the boys both started back for an instant, in dismay. The room had been made very dark. A kerosene lamp lighted and placed on the floor shed a dim light upon an awful image. It was dressed chiefly in white, with outstretched arms and reached nearly to the ceiling.

After the first start, Henri ran in, threw open the shutters, and drew up the shades, letting out the stifling odor of the kerosene, and in, the light and air.

The figure was formed of Henri's sheets and pillows, pinned and tied on umbrellas and brooms

in every imaginable manner and, alas, decked out with all Henri's most treasured articles of toilette. He had reached the age now when these things were matters of very great importance in his eyes, and was over careful and orderly in his person. It really was, then, a great trial to the lad, and added another to the long score he was resolving to settle with his little brothers. His friend sympathized with him as they replaced the things and put the room in order, they discussed earnestly what should be done to reduce these wild Indians to order.

"There's no use in telling, for there's nobody who can manage them, but father, and I don't want to bother him, and besides it's a beastly mean thing to do; and it's a shame if I can't manage those little toads myself."

The room now straightened, Henri wished to show his friend his most valued treasure, a history of the war, which he was compiling with the assistance, and under the direction of his friend, Dr. Mays. They went into the family living room, and Henri drew the neat volume from his father's desk, and opened it with some pride. It was of white unruled paper and was written in Henri's neatest hand, not a blot or erasure in it.

"You see," said Henri, as he unfolded it to his friend's admiring gaze, "the little rascals don't dare to touch father's desk and it's the only place in New York City, where I could keep it safe from them."

There was a stifled giggle from the balcony ; then the black kitten shot once more through the air, and descended on the desk before them, spitting, with her fur distended and tail high in the air : before the boys could prevent it, she had stuck her paw in the ink bottle, and then on the beautiful fair page of the history, as she flew across the desk and out the window.

Poor Henri, he was too full of grief to say a word, and choked with repressed tears, he gazed on the inky foot tracks which had ruined so many hours of patient work.

"It's too bad, Hen ; indeed it's too bad," said his friend, "but I think you could cut out these two pages so it would never show. I never knew such tricky little fellows."

"I believe that's a real witch cat. I never knew the like of her," said Henri, recovering himself.

"It's a beautiful book," said his friend. "I never saw a nicer one. Do you think you could help me make one?"

"Oh yes !" said Henri, pleased at his friend's praises, "it's easy enough, I'll show you any time."

"All right, then, I'll ask father about it. I must go now, but I really think somebody ought to lick those boys."

"And somebody will," said Henri grimly.

After his friend had gone, he carefully dried the book with a blotter, closed it, and put it back in the

desk. He then walked out on the balcony, with a determined air and step quite different from his usual good-natured, easy-going manner, and looked up and down the yard; there was no one in sight, and he was about turning to go in, when he heard, over his head, another repressed "he! he! he!" and looking up, he saw the lads still on the rafters overhead.

"Come out of that, now," said Henri, sharply, "it's time you and I had a reckoning."

"Come here little ducklings, come here and be killed, For you must be stuffed, and my customers filled."

sang one of the little fellows saucily.

"Very well," said Henri, "take your own time about it," and he walked into the room and came out again, with a chair and book, and seating himself, began to read.

This was a turn of affairs of which the twins did not approve. Nearly an hour went by, and Henri showed no sign of relenting.

"I say, Hen," said a voice overhead, "let us off this time, and we'll tell you where Dougherty hides the gingerbread."

No response.

Mrs. Dougherty appeared, and announced that supper was ready, and then disappeared again, but Henri never stirred.

"I say, Tom," said one little lad to the other, "did

you hear what that Pollard girl said about Hen last time she came up to see the Jenkyns?"

"No, what was it?" said he.

There was much whispering and giggling between the two, and Henri was observed to prick up his ears slightly.

"I say, Hen, let us off just this time. Elise and papa are coming tomorrow, and we are going out to-night to get our hair cut, and tomorrow we'll begin to go to school, and be good and won't plague you any more, 'honest Injun,' and we'll tell you what Miss Pollard said, besides."

"Well," said the good-natured elder brother, "but remember this is the last time. The very next trick you play on any body, you shall smart for it. What did Miss Pollard say?" he asked rather sheepishly, as the twins slid past him through the long French window.

"She said you were nothing but a Blaisted Britisher, with nigger blood in your veins," laughed the boy.

"She never said it," said Henri striding forward, and catching the little brother by the ear.

"Oh, boys," groaned Madame, "you are so noisy, and my head aches so badly."

"Here," shrieked the lad, "let me alone, you promised you know."

"Tell me the truth then," said Henri.

"Let me alone, and I will."

Henri dropped the ear, and the lad taking hold of the sides of his pants lifted them, as though they were skirts, and walked across the room saying in a most affected tone and manner :

"What a distinguished air Mr. Rocks has got, Jerushy."

There was a general laugh, in which even the poor mother joined, but added :

"What dirty boys, can't you wash yourselves, before coming to the table?"

The boys were about to seat themselves, coolly, paying no attention to her ; but Henri said threateningly :

"Go, and make yourselves decent, if you can."

"We're no dudes like you," said Tom.

They obeyed for once, and soon came with a small circle around their mouths clean, seated themselves at the table, and peace was restored.





CHAPTER XXIII.

THE HOME.

M. DE LA ROCHE and Elise reached Jersey City in the early morning. Elise was delighted at the life and glitter of the beautiful New York Bay and her natural expressions of delight drew many admiring eyes on the pretty child. The freshness of the salty breeze blowing off the ocean was indeed grateful, after the stuffy sleeping cars, and both were sorry to leave the boat for the close hot city the smell of which was any thing but grateful to the senses. When they reached the other side of the ferry they took the Eighth Avenue horse car for uptown. There was no Elevated Road in those days and it was more than an hour's ride to One Hundredth Street then.

"Doesn't it seem like another world, papa?" said Elise, as she looked, with repugnance, around the dirty car.

The father smiled sadly, as he thought how much greater a change the child might find in the home, to which he was taking her. As they drew near

the end of their journey, he turned to Elise, with a look of anxiety, hesitated a little, and then said :

“ My daughter you know,——”

“ Yes, papa, I know,” said Elise interrupting him, and the mute pressure of the little hand on his was sufficient ; no more need be said.

When they reached the house, neglect was visible everywhere. The front gate was off its hinges, the path up to the front door, which wound through the shrubbery and under the trees had once been beautiful but was now thick with weeds, the broad portico in front of the house was strewn with the boys' play things and various portions of their wardrobe. In the front hall were still to be seen the packing cases and straw in which various purchases had arrived. It was a grand, broad hall, with tiled floor, running directly through the house, with large glass doors at both ends. A winding staircase of carved mahogany, which should have been polished, but was dull with scrubbing, led to the floor above.

A tall, lanky woman dressed in the plainest and scantiest of bright calico dresses, protected by a long linen working apron, was scrubbing down these stairs with a scrubbing brush, soap, and hot water. She stopped at seeing M. de la Roche and Elise enter, and rose to her feet. Elise noticed as she came forward to greet them how spotlessly clean she looked.

"Mornin', Mr. Rocks," she said, in very positive tones, "You're heartily welcome I'm sure. We rather expected you yesterday. Mrs. Rocks she fretted considerbul until night, and then she got so all fired mad with him, that it did her lots of good. Is this your little gal you brought along with yer? Wal aint she as pretty as a picter?"

"What was the matter," said M. de la Roche, sharply, trying to speak pleasantly and not show his annoyance.

"Wal yer see them little fellers of yourn, they got into his garden patch, and they trampled down the cowcumber vines considerbul, an' pulled off a lot of green pears, that he sot out a store by, and they wa'nt near ready for pullin' neither. So he got out a strap to hit 'em a little an' scare 'em but he wouldn't hurt 'em none, not fer all creation, an' ef you'll believe it them little fellers floored him, they are the cutest. Miss Rocks came pretty nigh gittin' the high strikes and tried to send Henri off for the perlice but there the boy has too much sense for that. I prevailed on her to wait fer you to settle it, an' I guess she feels better to-day. I sent her a basket of garden sass, but there, she could no more cook it than a baby, and Miss Dougherty's too lazy. Now this little lady looks as though she would make a right smart housekeeper, hey!"

"I want to learn," said Elise, looking earnestly. "Will you teach me?"

"Guess I will, indeed, and you'll soon beat me all holler. Ain't she the cute lady?" said Mrs. Jenkyns, looking at her admiringly. "She'll soon show you a different home, sir, but them little youngsters of yours, if the devil don't ketch them, we might as good hev no devil at all. Now this is one of the right sort, without a thread of shiftlessness in her." Here the sharp eyes scanned Elise approvingly.

M. de la Roche bowed rather stiffly and moved on. This woman was a perpetual thorn in his side, constantly reminding him of his loss of position. Was it not after all a Quixotic idea? Was it worth while, he sometimes asked himself, bitterly, to suffer so much for his principles, and above all to bring such suffering on his family, and, as it looked now, the loss of his boys' souls. They were growing, like rank weeds, stronger in evil day by day. Had God forgotten that it was all for Him that he had given up his home and fled into this strange land?

He drew Elise along the hall with a clouded face, and opened a door leading from the hall into what had once been the drawing-room of the old mansion. Elise sprang in to greet the dear ones and then paused and looked round her with dismay. Dirt and disorder reigned supreme. Who was that sitting in a low chair near the front window so absorbed in her books that she heard nothing at all of what was going on around her? Could that untidy, neglected

little woman with soiled, ragged dress and unkempt hair be the mother of whom they were so proud? Could two short months have made such a change? She looked an instant in dismay, and then flew to clasp her arms about her mother's neck, and gave her a hearty hug and kiss.

The mother roused herself with some difficulty, looked around bewildered and confused, as she jumped hastily up, saying :

"Why, Elise, is this you at last? How rough you are, child. Where have you been all this time? Oh, Henri! how could you stay away so long and leave us alone? Elise could surely have finished her journey without taking you away, and leaving us at the mercy of those dreadful creatures."

Here she burst into tears, and sobbed violently, as she added between her sobs, "Our lives have been in constant danger and I have nearly died from fear. What would my poor parents say if they knew to what I and my children have been brought? Yes; they are whipped like slaves by these cowardly Yankees."

She petulantly pushed off Elise, who strove to comfort her, and clung, sobbing, to her husband. The poor child, thus repulsed, walked to the back of the room to hide her grief, and looked out the window with a swelling heart, but her feelings were instantly changed to a joyful surprise at the sight which was spread out before her,

and her exclamations of delight drew her parents to her side.

There were two long double French windows at that side of the room, which led out on a balcony at the back of the house, and the three passed out through one, on the balcony. There before them rolled the broad, noble Hudson, grand in its calm, peaceful repose. In the distance as far up as they could see, were the Palisades, grim and fortress like. The river was dotted here and there with the white sails of yachts and fishing boats. The view extended up the river some three or four miles, until lost in distant haze. "Oh, how beautiful! how beautiful!" exclaimed Elise clasping her hands in ecstasy. An excursion steamer with a band playing just then swept by reminding Elise forcibly of that other scene not long ago, on the bosom of that yet broader river in the sunny south. Turning to her mother she put her arm gently around her as she told her the story of poor Jacques, both were weeping, but with gentle tears, before she had finished, and there was formed a new tie between them; a bond of sympathy that had never existed before.

"I am a selfish wife and mother, Henri, I know," said the poor little woman, "and I have never been taught how to do any better, but Elise has suddenly grown from a child to a woman, and is going to be our great comfort, I am sure."

"She has certainly grown many years in two

months," said her father gazing at her fondly, "and is going to be your right hand in defence, dear, against the wiles of the enemy."

"Yeu need not laugh at me Henri," said his wife, with a sigh, "I'm sure I need it," but she was interrupted by a loud whoop as the three boys came tearing up the steps to see their sister; there were great rejoicings and embracings at seeing the travellers, above all the dear sister whom they had mourned as dead. The father could not find it in his heart to call his naughty boys to account, on his first return home, for their delinquencies but hoped for much, through their sister's influence.

The express man arrived just then with Elise's trunk, and there was another joyous excitement in opening it, and giving out presents. When these were distributed and duly admired, Elise caused an immense sensation by taking out a large working apron and enveloping herself in it, with an air of dignified authority. She began to do her best to get the place in some kind of order and to help Mrs. Dougherty to get the dinner. The boys tried to help, and Mrs. Dougherty was inspired to do her best. It was, after all, a poor attempt, but the rooms soon began to wear a different aspect, and the boys were immensely interested.

That evening, after she had coaxed the twins to bed with the promise of a splendid story, she stole out on the balcony to find her father. It was a

lovely moonlight night, and M. de la Roche was enjoying the luxury of the one cigar he allowed himself daily.

His wife and Henri were at their books inside, when he felt a little arm steal around his neck. He turned and drew his little daughter down on his knee and they sat some time gazing at the fair scene before them in silence. Finally Elise said with some little effort:

"Papa, I told our dear Lord that morning of my Mass, at the hospital, that if He would cure me, and make my life a comfort and blessing to you, that I would give my life to His service as long as I lived: for you know, papa, that as it was given back to me I was bound to do something in return, I mean even more than ordinary, eh?"

"Yes, daughter, what will you do for Him?"

"Well, papa, one day when Sister Genevieve was giving us a Catechism lesson, not to me, but to the children who were up, I was feeling too ill to listen, until she began telling them a story, and then I listened to every word. She said:

"Once upon a time, there was a Sister of Charity, who lived in New York. She was young and very happy, her work was to visit among the poor and sick and try to relieve their wants. The Sister was very happy because she was so good. She thought her life could hardly be happier in Heaven, except for the suffering she saw around her. Well,

one day the Sister-Servant sent for her to come to her room. She went and found the Sister-Servant talking with the Chaplain. When this little Sister came in, the Sister-Servant turned to her, and said: 'Sister, you remember how much love our founder St. Vincent de Paul, had for the little foundlings? Now we want you to begin a Foundling Asylum.'

"You know, papa, a foundling is a little baby whom its mother does not love or care for."

"This little Sister thought that the Sister-Servant had gone crazy, and she said:

" 'But my Sister, I have no money, and no ability to begin the work.' "

" 'That is true,' " said the Sister-Servant, " 'but if the work is God's, He will furnish both the money and the abilities.' "

"So they went to work in faith, and the little Sister told our dear Lord; if He would be pleased to bless and prosper the work, that she would never refuse anyone who asked charity of her, and she never has. Now, many thousands of souls look to her for aid, and thousands have had the grace of baptism, who could not have had it, but for the Asylum."

"I thought, papa, that was a beautiful promise to the dear Lord, Whose dying words were: 'Love one another,' so I made it mine, and God has accepted it, papa, for you see He has cured me."

"May He bless you dear and give you grace to

keep it faithfully. You will have plenty of calls for it," he said with a sigh.

"Guess yer haint made no cal'lations fer yer little gal to sleep, hev yer?" said a shrill voice behind them.

The father started, and looked at Elise questioningly.

"My child," he said, "I verily believe there is not a bed for you in the house."

Oh, never mind, papa," said Elise, "I can find a place, I can sleep anywhere."

"Now there's my hall bedroom, she kin hev it just as well as not. I'd jist love to hev her there, till you kin fix a place fer her, but 'taint no ways safeto allow her out doors in the night air, she's sure to kitch the fever. I tell him I won't allow him to sit out after the sun goes down, noways and nohow."

So it was arranged. Mrs. Jenkyns and Elise soon became firm friends, and the child with a will to do it, and so good a teacher, became a famous house-keeper. She had, of course, times of discouragement, but she kept on steadily, never failing in her resolution.

In this she was greatly helped by her firm friend and confessor, Father Grey. When the time came that she could once more return to Regalia, she was not sorry for the trials she had gone through for she knew they had formed and made her a "Tool meet for the Master's use."



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